

## Time After Time

by Ellyn Ruthstrom

The thing about coming out...is that it never stops. With the world being ruled by hetero norms, we constantly challenge the assumptions when we tell the people in our lives that we are bisexual. Even after almost 20 years of being out, the everyday activities of meeting new people, finding new jobs, and joining new groups always raises the issue of needing to come out all over again. And I really do NEED to come out if I spend any amount of time with someone or I wouldn't be able to talk about my girlfriend, my activism, and most of my

cultural life. It's not stressful for me any more but back in the day...

When November rolls around I always recall a Thanksgiving with some of my family and my first serious girlfriend. I was out to my sister, whose house we were celebrating at, but not to any of the other family members there that day. I remember feeling incredibly conscious of how I looked at Robin and, of course, I tried not to give anything away by touching her more than I would a good friend.





# HER

BY LARAINNE WILSON

In the silence, I hear her words being spoken from the soul  
In the darkness, a light shines down from the heaven I have  
come to  
know only now.

In the stillness, her heart leaps with mine.  
In nakedness, we are known one to the other.

Underneath her, I feel so strong.  
On top of her, I feel so weak.  
Next to her, I feel whole.

Discovering her love is one of my life's greatest joys.  
With her, I am truly me.

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BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:  
[REDACTED]

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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IN THE NEXT  
ISSUE:

Bi Stereotypes



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After the feast we were playing a game of Scattergories. In that game you have to find something that starts with a certain letter for a bunch of different categories. One category was book title, the letter was "h." When we got to Robin, her choice was "How to Make Love to a Woman." Everyone at the table burst into nervous laughter for a moment and then on we went to the next category. I tried to be as cool as possible even though I was sure that everyone understood the implications of her answer. As we were walking to my car that night, the first thing I said to her was "Did you have to say How to Make Love to a Woman?" "It's all I could think of," was her reply. And we must have laughed for a good half hour on the drive home.

I did have to have a real sit-down coming out conversation with my dad within the following few months because Robin and I decided to move in together and I couldn't imagine hiding that from him. I used a strategy that I would recommend to anyone. Always compliment the person by saying that you know they understand how important it is to be honest and that their relationship means too much to you to keep such an important part of your life a secret. He was cool with it, which was lucky because his youngest brother came out to him (when he was in his later 50s) a few years later. And interestingly, the younger son of his girlfriend Marge came out to her a few years after that so they both understand how to deal with same-sex couples in the family.

One of my most significant coming out experiences was when I came out to my grandmother. When I moved back east to be closer

to my family I really wanted to be able to share more of my life with her. My mother had died when I was 13 and my grandma was a very special person to me. So I decided it was time to tell her that I was bi. Seeing that I had had several boyfriends and had been married to a man in my 20s, it was actually kind of a surprise to her. After asking a few questions like, "Is this why you got a divorce?" (It wasn't) and "Do you have a girlfriend?" (I didn't) she said, "Well, to each their own poison."

I told her that she could tell anyone she wanted—my Papa, my uncle, cousins—because while I didn't feel I wanted to have one-on-one conversations with each of them I didn't mind them knowing. I found out after her death that she never talked to the extended family about it, but I am now out to all of them and my current girlfriend, Claire, is accepted as part of the family.

As a member of the Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth, I was at a meeting in Worcester recently with some queer teens and their allies. One of the teens told me that she wasn't out to her family yet and that she had to remember to turn her Claddagh ring around when she went home so they couldn't see that she was in love with someone. (The tradition is to wear the ring one way if you are single and the opposite if you are "taken.") I was relating this to another bi friend of mine and she said, "Wow, you forget that people still have to do things like that." Yeah, and I think back to that undercover Thanksgiving and feel very thankful for how far my family and I have come.



**SHERI STEVENS**, 40, is a native of the Metrowest area. Raised in a strictly traditional household, Sheri identifies as bisexual and accepts and promotes acceptance of all life choices. She is the mother of four, a small business owner, and enjoys jewelry-making and writing as therapeutic tools. Her business writing has been featured in **EXHIBITOR Magazine**, a periodical geared toward the events industry, as has been her career for nearly two decades.

**LARAINNE M. WILSON**, M.Ed., 31, resides in Metrowest. Larainne identifies as bisexual. She lived many of her early childhood years in Selma, AL. At the age of twelve, she returned to her birthplace (Connecticut) and was raised by same gendered parents. She did her undergraduate work in Psychology and then trained as a school counselor at Boston University. She now works in the field of educational leadership. She has been writing since her teen years as a way of interpreting her experience and helping others to cope. In 2001, a poem she wrote was featured in "Survival in Writing and Art" a women's healing journal which was published by the Connecticut Trauma Coalition. She is proud to be a part of the diverse, positive queer community in Boston.

## BY LARAINNE WILSON AND SHERI STEVENS

That the world is so busy  
so crazy  
so fast  
the days they fly by us  
as if time's being cast  
out like a lure at the end of a line  
so sharp and so shiny  
with points very fine  
it makes me think of  
how much I love you  
how much I want us both  
to say and to do  
to have and to share  
to play and to care  
to feel and to want and to love  
without compare  
you are in my heart  
in my head, in my soul  
thoughts of you spinning round  
I can no longer control  
the depth, the passion, the strength  
of it all  
I'm scared - no I'm terrified -  
for it's a long fall  
I must fool my mind  
and not think of the bad  
I must fool my heart  
and not consider the sad  
I want to live now  
live fully and free  
I just want to love you  
and be completely happy



The world does move so quickly indeed  
That is why, with our hearts, we must always take heed  
To never to take for granted the gifts that we hold,  
In all of the stories that have (and haven't) been told.  
How much love we have and how much love we've lost  
When those loves before us came at too high a cost  
I love you too, Sheri my sweet treasure  
My time with you always means such wonderful pleasure  
The taste of your lips, the softness in your eyes  
Your look of longing when we say our goodbyes  
I long for us too...a future untold, unknown, unseen  
Hoping the life in store isn't just an awesome dream  
To want and to be, to live and to know  
To hope and to strive, to thrive and to grow  
All of these wishes, I wish for my each night  
When I lay down to sleep without you in sight  
All of these wishes, I wish for my dear  
Most of all though, I wish you were near  
Your fears are mine, please know that is true  
But fear is not here when I say "I-love you"  
It goes away for a time, then it is back  
Fearing not what we have, but what we may lack  
The spiraling downward is a terrible thing  
Hoping though, that comfort to you I can bring  
To say the right thing to help you to know  
My love for you is longing to develop and grow  
To think of the bad and the sad is so hard  
Especially when your fragile heart you must guard  
To steal you away, to be happy and free  
To live in a world where you can be you and I can be me  
Is my desire so rich, so full and so true  
To exist in a place where the "us" is just me and you  
Gift and Response





I've become a big fan and avid reader of young adult LGBT literature.

Several years ago, at the True Colors Conference in Connecticut, I attended a workshop on this subject facilitated by Alex Sanchez, the author of a series of books targeted to young adults. Sanchez is the author of *Rainbow Boys*, *Rainbow High* and *Rainbow Road*, a series of books that follows the lives of three high school friends. One of the characters is possibly bisexual, though he does not identify as such.

At this workshop, Sanchez discussed the genre of young adult literature, his own writing process, and handed out a bibliography of LGBT-themed novels. I remember asking Sanchez, during the Q&A session, whether he could think of any books with a character who identifies as bisexual. He couldn't think of any. I said I hoped that he would take up the task, because it was sorely needed.

Fast forward to this past spring, when I went to another workshop on this topic, this one facilitated by Brent Hartinger, whose best-known book (so far) is *The Geography Club*. Again, I asked my question. Hartinger agreed that there was precious little out there, but recommended that I read his newest book, *SplitScreen: Attack of the Soul-Sucking Brain Zombies*. We chatted more after the workshop, and I gave him a copy of *Getting Bi*. A few months later, an autographed copy of *SplitScreen* arrived in



the mail. When I finally got around to reading it, I was delighted: the protagonists, Min Wei and Russel Middlebrook, both 16, are best friends. She is bi and he is gay. And here's what I love most about the book. Min is a very sweet young woman. She is not conflicted about her sexual orientation. She is not confused. She is not closeted. She is not in denial. She is simply herself. And she happens to identify as bi. As Min writes at the opening of the book: "Russel had a boyfriend, and Gunnar had a girlfriend. Ironically, I'm bisexual so I would have been okay with either a boyfriend or a girlfriend. I didn't have either one, however, so I was feeling a little excluded." Finally!

*SplitScreen* is actually two books in one. It tells the same story from two different perspectives. Each version has its own cover, and is complete by itself. But flip the book over, begin reading from the other side, and the story begins again, seen through a different pair of eyes.

Here's the best thing about young adult literature (with the clear exception of the Harry Potter series): I can read an entire YA book in just one day, which leaves me with a great sense of accomplishment. I like that.

-Robyn Ochs



# SISTER CITY PROGRAM?

The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network is probably BBWN's closest relative. Founded just a couple of years after BBWN, the two organizations have evolved on parallel tracks. Our newsletter is BiWomen; theirs is cleverly named North Bi Northwest.

On July 11, Robyn Ochs was in Seattle and had the pleasure of spending the evening at the LGBT Center with the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. She did her workshop on "Crossing Lines: Identity and the Sexuality Spectrum." The event was well-attended, and most of the women present went out to dinner afterward.





# BISEXUALITY DAY



BRC Board members presented Unsung Hero Awards to long-time BBWN member Denise Garrow-Pruitt and tenured national bisexual activist Wayne Bryant at the BRC/Fenway Community sponsored Celebrate Bisexuality Day in September. Pictured are (top row) BRC board members Linda Blair, Luigi Ferrer, Ellyn Ruthstrom, Arthur Cohen and (bottom row) awardees Wayne Bryant and Denise Garrow-Pruitt, and board member Ron Suresha.

The Bisexual Resource Center teamed up with Fenway Community for the second year in a row to co-sponsor its Celebrate Bisexuality Day event in September. This year the BRC gave Unsung Hero Awards to long-time BBWN member Denise Garrow-Pruitt and tenured national bisexual activist Wayne Bryant. Ellyn Ruthstrom, BRC President, presented the award to Denise at CBD.





# SING LOUDLY IN YOUR CAR!

BY LYNN ROSENBAUM

I am excited to be publishing *Sing Loudly in your Car! A Book of Whimsy for Grown-ups*. (forthcoming Fall 2007) The book is a collection of poems, essays and illustrations exploring the delights and disappointments of everyday life. The rhyming poems celebrate life's pleasures and absurdities with colorful characters and playful illustrations by Brooke Hendrickson. The prose memories are written through a child's voice, but with a grown-up's wisdom. I describe expressions of love, life in today's fast-paced society, finding one's own voice, and many other topics. The book's youthful energy will remind you of parts of yourself you had forgotten all about. Don't be alarmed if you find yourself giggling out loud! If you would like to purchase *Sing Loudly in your Car! A Book of Whimsy for Grown-ups*, please contact me at [lynnrosenbaum@earthlink.net](mailto:lynnrosenbaum@earthlink.net)

I am happy to share with you some short excerpts from a chapter called "Make Some Noise."

Lola Sings

Lola sings loudly in her car  
whether travelling near or far.

She sings off key,

But is totally free.

Maybe she'll be a rock star!

Blissful Sensation

Sitting twirly whirly in the middle of the day,

Cuddling curly early in the sun's shining ray.

Munching piddly widdly on a carrot or a chip,

Slurping sliddly diddly on a tantalizing sip.

Fingering prickly wickly on a tuft of hair,

Stroking schmoozy woozy on a comforting care.

Savoring tipsy wipsy touches light upon the skin,

Wriggling this way that way from a squinch beneath the chin.

Shivering bupply scrupply all the way from head to toe.

Wrapping snugly wuggly in a warm embrace or throw.

Lingering idly wildy in a pool of scrumptious light,

Singing shrilly frilly on a percolating night.

© 2007 Lynn Rosenbaum

Lynn Rosenbaum is an educator, activist, writer, and musician living in Medford, Massachusetts. She has written for *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and recorded *Floating*, a CD of original music.





## BRUNCH COORDINATOR WANTS YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [debmo345@gmail.com](mailto:debmo345@gmail.com) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.



BBWN's October brunch was hosted by Lisa in Jamaica Plain. A great selection of food (including fresh crepes!) and lively conversation made for a great gathering. Don't miss Lisa's artwork in the background.



# D A T E S   T O   R E M E M B E R



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02140

## ONGOING EVENTS

### Last Friday:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Cambridge  
Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge.  
Email Mischelle at [puckipucki@aol.com](mailto:puckipucki@aol.com) for more  
information

### 2nd Thursday:

Women Over 40! New gatherings meeting from  
6 p.m. until whenever. Held at Geoffrey's Cafe,  
4257 Washington St., Roslindale, just north of the  
square

### 1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group  
meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stan-  
hope St. in Boston. Call  
617-424-9595 for info.

### 2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group,  
7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257  
Elm St. in Somerville.



# THE LAST NOTES

Victory: The MassEquality Gala

Wednesday, December 5, 2007

7 - 10 pm

Cyclorama

539 Tremont St

Boston, MA 02116

Business or festive attire requested

Valet service available.



MassEquality will be holding a big, fabulous GALA on the evening of December 5th, to celebrate our amazing successes at the State House. If you can't make it, you can still purchase a ticket to the GALA or make a donation to MassEquality at [www.massequality.org](http://www.massequality.org).

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting

Wednesday, December 19, 6-9 p.m.

Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St., 3rd floor conference room

6-7, light dinner and drinks, socializing

7-9, look back over 2007, elect new board, look ahead to the future

Dear bi community and interested allies,

Please join us for the annual meeting of the board of the Bisexual Resource Center on December 19th. It's time to assess where we've come over the last year and look ahead to the future.

The annual meeting is a great time to find out how the BRC functions and how you can be a part of the organization, either as a board member or as another active volunteer.

What does it take to be a BRC board member? Board members are asked to attend one meeting per month as well as contribute some time during the year to fundraising, event planning, and representing the organization at Pride celebrations and other LGBT gatherings.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a board member but you want more information, email Ellyn Ruthstrom (current BRC board president) at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net) for details. Also, if you do intend to come to the meeting, let Ellyn know so she can anticipate the food order.





by Ellyn Ruthstrom

I voted for Hillary Clinton in the Massachusetts primary in February and I hope that I get a chance to vote for her again in November. While it's not the first time that I have voted for a woman for president (I voted for Carol Moseley Braun in the 2004 primary), it was definitely the first time I thought that she actually had a chance to win.

Ironically, a year ago I would have told you that I did not want Hillary to be the Democratic nominee because I don't believe in political dynasties in a democratic country. At the time, many people told me that it was a lame reason to not support her if she is a qualified candidate. Eventually I agreed with them, and as my opportunity to vote in the primary neared I took time to look at my options. I watched many of the televised debates, tried to catch more news analysis programs, and visited the candidate websites. I got a download of Obama's book, *The Audacity of Hope*, and listened to it over the course of about two weeks.

One of the feminist list-serves that I belong to has been buzzing back and forth with the pros and cons of voting for either Clinton or Obama. Some posters say a feminist should support a viable female can-

didate, some say they have to vote their class or race allegiances, some purport experience or voting record of the candidates are most important. This is such a unique position for Democrats to be in; we are usually unenthusiastic about all the candidates and choose the one who pisses us off the least. Who knew that having stronger candidates would be so distressing?

As a Massachusetts voter, I was recently in the same position of choosing between a black man or a white woman in the 2006 gubernatorial election. In no way was it the same kind of choice as the Obama/Clinton contest. The politics of Republican Kerry Healey were so far to the right of mine that there was never a whisper of a chance that I would throw my vote to her, no matter her sex. But it is hopeful to note that these match-ups between more diverse candidates may become more common.

I am an unrepentant feminist and I do believe that if there are two qualified candidates who basically have the same positions on issues that I will choose the female candidate because I do want women to have power. I don't see enough differences between Clinton and Obama on the issues to affect my choice. (Some people site the fact that Clinton initially voted in support of the Iraq War and Obama didn't. Remember that Obama only became a U.S. senator in January of 2005, almost three years after the war had already started.) But I do see a big difference in experience and ability to discuss issues in depth. Clinton seems comfortable discussing just about anything, from health care to education, from military spending to the environment. When I see Obama talking off the cuff I find him hesitant, and he often rambles off topic.

I'm not ashamed to say that part of the reason I voted for Hillary is because I am a woman and she is a woman. Voting blocs are important and I find it very disheartening that each election we talk about the importance of the women's vote (remember that silly "Year of the Woman" back in 1992) and our votes end

[continued on p. 3]



# BBWN 2007 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

<b>Balance forward 1/1/07:</b>		<b>2782.71</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Printing	1437.89	1342.69
Postal fees & postage	299.35	911.18
Supplies	502.24	141.04
Merchandise purchased	193.50	431.33
Event expenses	585.18	398.16
Bank charges (fee for 3rd-party bounced check)	20.85	0
Total expenses	3039.01	3334.40
<b>Income</b>		
Dues	627.50	795.00
Merchandise	1148.10	1797.40
Bank Interest	2.52	2.52
Donations	250.00	0
Event income	375.00	269.00
Book project income	214.98	0
Total income:	2618.10	2863.92

**Balance as of 12/31/07** **2312.23**

**Note:** The balance in our checking account, while not immediately threatening, is down for the third consecutive year. If you are in a position to do so, please renew your paid subscription and/or consider making a donation to BBWN.

Remember, BBWN is important! In existence since 1983, we are the oldest bi women's group in the world, and Bi Women is the oldest continuous bi publication in the United States. We have no paid staff and no regular sources of income. It is our long-standing policy to make Bi Women available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and the newsletter is given away at conferences and other public venues, and is mailed free of charge to many colleges and other community organizations. For many women, Bi Women is their first affirmation of bisexuality.

Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (both groups: PO Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140) — be sure to put "for BBWN in the comment line." Contact Robyn 617-413-2717 or [robyn@robynocho.com](mailto:robyn@robynocho.com) for details.

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN since 1989.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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Editor:

Joanna Green



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[continued from p. 1]

up being divided between the male candidates. Now we actually have a very qualified, articulate woman to vote for and some women seem to be going out of their way to explain why they won't vote for a woman just because she's a woman. I don't happen to feel that my concerns as a woman are represented as well by men as by some women, just as many underrepresented people have felt it necessary to get people who share a common identity into office to represent them. Do I agree with everything that Clinton has ever said or done? No. Did I agree with everything said or done by all the other candidates I've ever voted for? No. Clinton is an imperfect candidate and I'm not willing to wait for a perfect female candidate to come along before I'll support her.

I sadly witnessed a similar case of a voting bloc being split in my own city's election this past fall. Brockton, Massachusetts is a racially diverse city with about half the population being people of color. There are no people of color on the city council and all of the state representatives and state senators in the area are white. Jass Stewart is a young African American man who ran for the office of mayor for the second time in 2007. You'd think that if Stewart built a coalition of progressive white people with the communities of color he would be able to get a high enough percentage to win, right? Oh, did I forget to tell you that Stewart happens

to be a gay man? That apparently was a deal breaker for many people of color in the community and he lost by 700 votes. So there is still no office holder in this city that represents people of color.

As I see the Obama bandwagon gaining momentum, I see the opportunity to have a female president in the near future as fading away. I have often thought that the first female president in the U.S. would probably have to be a Republican, not believing that Americans would actually accept a more "liberal" woman. And if Hillary Clinton fails in her run for the nomination this time I'll bet that is what will happen. Then I'll have every reason to not cast a vote for a female candidate.





# BBWN AND BEYOND

BY SUE N.

People with alternative sexualities, by that I mean "non-straight," sometimes have a very meandering path when it comes to sexual self-discovery. I can say that my own road has been an indirect one to a destination that does not neatly fall into a conventional category. I had been attracted to boys since my early pre-pubescence, and experienced fleeting "puppy" romances from my late elementary through middle-school years. In high school I had my first true relationship with a sensitive, gorgeously sculpted athlete named Mike. That connection lasted for three years and was very emotionally intense. It was the first time I can say that I "loved" someone romantically.

I also had underlying feelings of attraction to females, I realize, as I assess some of my behavior in retrospect. As a pre-teen, I loved to flirt with and tickle my older brother's teen girlfriend (who flirted back). I didn't think about girls in a consciously erotic way, but the excitement feelings were there.

During the period of my emerging sexuality (the 1970s), lesbian and gay issues were not prominent in the media like they are today. There were no "out" gay or lesbian celebrities; nor were there any overtly gay or lesbian TV characters at the time. I lived in a rather conservative area of Florida, where I did not know any people who identified as gay or bisexual.

It wasn't until my college years in Miami that I began exploring an alternative sexual identity. For the first time, I allowed myself to experience conscious feelings of attraction to women. During my freshman year, I met a lesbian in one of my classes, and through her encouragement and assistance, I became acquainted with a friendly, lesbian social group. I also joined activist and social organizations in the Miami LGBT community. In those early years of my adult life, immersing myself in gay and lesbian culture was an important part of my self-discovery process. I embraced the history and politics of my newfound community. It was a very exciting period.

I had my first relationship with a woman when I was 19 yrs old . . . a highly anticipated event. The physical act of making love to woman was exhilarating and felt very natural to me. I started to identify as a lesbian and felt very much at home with my new lesbian friends, but my sexual and emotional preferences were never what one would call a "Kinsey 6."

At the 1979 Florida State Gay and Lesbian Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, I attended a workshop session on bisexuality. A woman in attendance interestingly described herself as "ambisexual." She translated that as meaning she was attracted to certain personalities, and the gender of the person had less importance than the psychic connection. I could relate to that very much.

In the autumn of 1980, I transferred to Wheaton College in southeastern Massachusetts. It was exciting to be in New England, where so much was happening culturally and intellectually. Boston seemed like a haven for people who were living lives on their own terms and questioning convention. I was eager to settle there after college graduation.

I was living in Somerville in 1983, when I had the fortune to find out about a group of women, led by Robin Ochs, who were tentatively organizing a bi group. The first "big meeting" of BBWN was held at the lesbian bar, Somewhere Else, in the spring of 1984. I made it a priority to attend. What an exciting evening that was! The event brought joy to my being—all these women in one place and all of us were "in-betweens!" The discussions that took place that night had an amazing level of candidness. I found it highly appealing to be with people who were willing to honestly self-explore.

I got involved with the group right away, attending meetings and events. The women of BBWN felt like kin; they possessed the open-ended spirits that I enjoy so much! I found them to be creative, aware, intelligent, fun and sexy.



I recall many of the exciting events of those early years of BBWN. The Network co-organized a mixed-gender bi retreat in Greenville, New Hampshire for a weekend in late July 1984. It was held in an idyllic setting at a lovely farmhouse retreat center known as "Another Place," where they served us delicious vegetarian food. It was a treat to spend the whole weekend with the wonderful women of BBWN, and it was also stimulating to meet bi's from other parts of New England. We engaged in awesome group discussions, spent time singing by the outdoor fire in the evenings, and had a particularly interesting day on Saturday. Saturday afternoon most of us headed out to swim at a natural pool by a lovely waterfall a few miles away. It was locally known as a nude swimming hole, and several local residents were there, partaking of the lovely day in the buff. Well, as they say, "When in Rome . . ." By the time the afternoon was over with, all of us from the retreat had succumbed to the unspoken peer pressure and disrobed to swim. To say the least, that day will probably remain in my memory forever!

A very engaging "New England Bisexual" conference was held in the spring of 1985 in Cambridge. Sessions there stimulated deep theoretical discussions with featured speakers. I recall very moving workshops where people emotionally opened up and were given support and confirmation. BBWN marched in the Boston Gay Pride Parade as a group in 1984 and 1985. A lesbian friend teased me for "marching with bisexuals at a GAY pride parade," but it felt totally right, and our group received many positive comments and hoots from our fellow queers. Another excellent bisexual conference was held in Portland, Maine in the spring of 1986. A large number of people attended from all over New England and also other parts of the Northeast. This conference was even larger than the previous year's and it was clear that something very exciting was happening. It was thrilling to be involved in a growing movement for bisexual community and visibility.

Unfortunately, late 1986 marked the tapering off of my involvement in BBWN due to some distracting life challenges. I was still interested in the mission of



Sue, June 1983

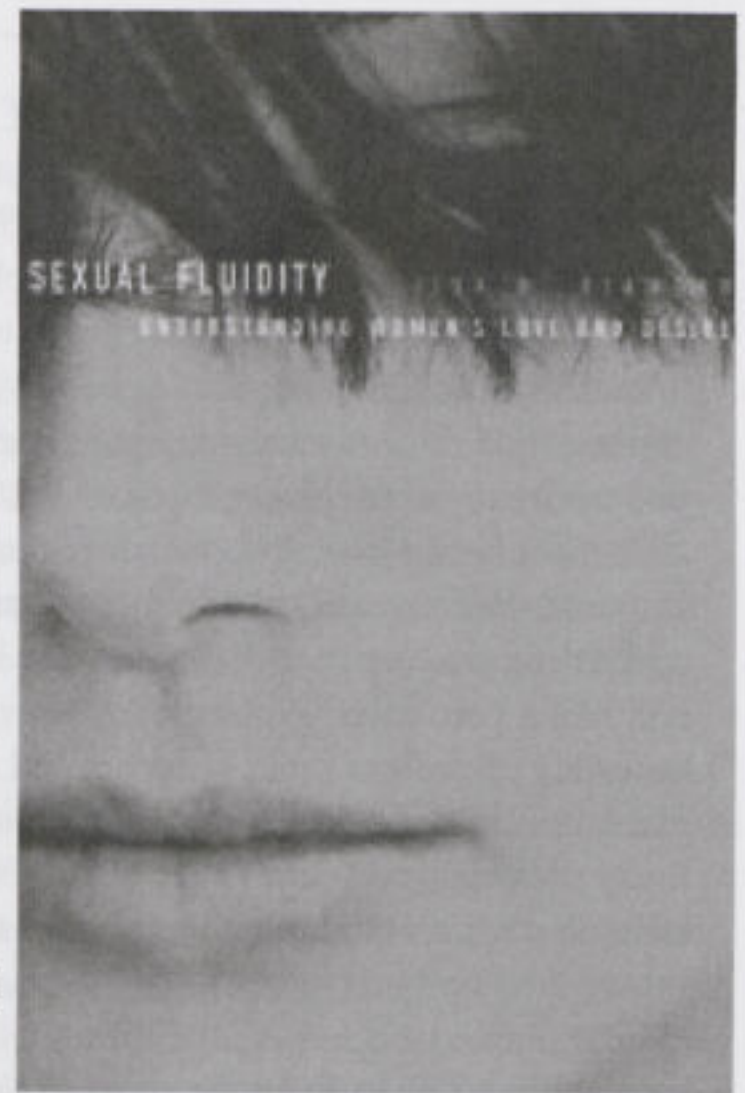
the group, and stayed on the mailing list, but was not able to participate like I had before. I moved from the Boston area to Pennsylvania in 1989.

I reconnected with the BBWN segment of my life, when I had the opportunity to spend time with Robyn Ochs in November 2006. Robyn had a two-day speaking engagement at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, where I am a graduate student. I am involved in the university LGBT group, "Identity," and was thrilled that our group made an effort to bring her here. It was a real treat to see someone from my Boston years, particularly the great activist and communicator, Robyn. She was a big hit at Edinboro and greatly impressed the students and staff. Her presentations are well designed and her communication style engaging.

My activities with and connection to the Boston Bisexual Women's Network were a valuable part of my early adulthood. I cherish those memories and feel blessed to have found such a great group of people, with kind hearts and an adventurous spirit. Thanks to Robyn, who had the vision to get this movement going!



AN INTERVIEW WITH  
LISA M. DIAMOND



# SEXUAL FLUIDITY

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S LOVE AND DESIRE

**RO:** I will begin this interview by saying that I am absolutely not a neutral bi-stander. You are working on a subject near and dear to my heart, and to my own professional work.

**LD:** All the better! I have found over the years that there are tons of us working in this field who have long been frustrated with the way that sexual orientation and identity are presented and discussed in mainstream culture, and I hope that this book will help to give some visibility to alternative perspectives.

**RO:** When and why did you first become interested in studying identity?

**LD:** When I entered graduate school, I knew that I wanted to study identity development among lesbian-gay-bisexual teens, but other than that, my interests were pretty vague, like most graduate students!

**RO:** Your research is based upon a long-term study that you began all that way back in 1995. What led you to decide upon this particular project? Had you always envisioned it as a longitudinal study?

**LD:** In graduate school, as I started reviewing all of the relevant research on lesbian-gay-bisexual identity

development, I quickly became frustrated by the fact that there was so little research on young women. So when I started my study, my primary motivation was to get women's voices back into the research literature. I wasn't all too sure about what exactly I was looking for, or what I would find, I just knew that it was high time for research to focus specifically on women's development. My approach was to ask a lot of good questions and to do a lot of careful listening. I knew that I wanted it to be a longitudinal study, but I was pretty naïve about how difficult it is to get those things up and running. My advisor at the time, Ritch Savin-Williams, was gently skeptical, but also stood by me 100%.

**RO:** One of the reasons people resist the idea of sexual orientation (which they often confuse with sexual orientation labels) as fluid, is that this invokes for many the idea that sexuality is a choice. Yet, a pillar of the gay rights movement is the assertion that sexual orientation is a fixed, immutable identity. One of my own challenges as a speaker has been explaining to people that I didn't wake up one day and decide to be bisexual. Rather, I discovered my bisexuality when in college I developed a full-blown, overwhelming crush on another woman. In fact, given the choice back then, I would certainly not have chosen to com-



plicate and add stress to my life by taking on such a misunderstood and unpopular identity. My choice at that time lay in figuring out what to call the feelings I was experiencing, and whether to share this information with others. Have you experienced resistance to your research from gay men and lesbians?

**LD:** Like you, I find myself having to explain over and over again the difference between fluidity and choice. When I first started publishing my research, and talking about my findings, I was quite concerned that my brothers and sisters in the lesbian-gay-bisexual community would find the results to be threatening, since they can potentially be misused and misinterpreted as arguing for "choice." But perhaps because I have always taken pains to clarify why fluidity is NOT equivalent to choice, I have received incredible support and encouragement from the lesbian-gay-bisexual community. I think it demonstrates that no matter what your particular identity label, or how you have experienced your sexuality over time, most lesbian-gay-bisexual individuals understand the downsides and dangers of overly rigid, categorical notions of sexuality that exclude and invalidate some people's experiences. After all, we have all had our own experiences invalidated by mainstream culture, so we understand that firsthand.

**RO:** What about anti-gay conservatives? Have they tried to spin your research to fit their own agenda?

**LD:** Unfortunately yes. I knew from the very beginning that that it was likely to happen, and that I wouldn't be able to prevent it. All I can do is speak out clearly and consistently about what my findings do and don't mean, and hope for the best. Part of the problem is that those folks aren't really interested in science to begin with; they just want to promote their

agenda, so it doesn't matter to them if I say "hey, that's the wrong interpretation of my findings!" Scientific accuracy has never been their concern.

**RO:** The primary audience for this interview is women who identify (to varying degrees) as bisexual. Do you have anything like to say specifically to us?

**LD:** I think that after many years in which the social sciences have systematically under-investigated and excluded women with bisexual attractions and identities, things may finally be starting to change. But it's going to take vigilance! Both researchers and activists need to keep the pressure on, and to speak out loudly against the exclusion of bisexual experiences. As I point out in my book, there is now a wealth of data indicating that especially among women, bisexual patterns of attraction are actually MORE common than exclusive same-sex attractions! So for all these years, when researchers have eliminated bisexual individuals from their samples, saying "oh, well, we don't know how to interpret them, they're really kind of unusual and exceptional," they've been wrong, wrong, wrong. Bisexuality is neither unusual nor exceptional, and any model of sexuality that fails to take it seriously is no model at all.

**RO:** There is an expression, "A normal person is just someone you don't know real well yet." My anecdotal experience tells me that so many of us with non-binary identities carry around a great deal of guilt and shame, and the feeling that we are odd. We're largely invisible, and we lack role models. When we break the silence and share our complex narratives, we add more oxygen to the room and allow all of the other people who don't neatly fit the binary narrative to breathe more deeply. Thank you, Lisa, for your role in providing clarity.

**LISA DIAMOND** is Associate Professor of Psychology and Gender Studies in the Department of Psychology at the University of Utah. She is the author of *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love and Desire* (Harvard University Press, February 2008), a book that challenges categorical models of female sexual orientation and maintains that all women—to differing degrees—maintain a capacity for flexible erotic responsiveness, dependent upon situational and interpersonal factors.

**ROBYN OCHS** is co-editor, with Sarah E. Rowley, of *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* and a founder of BBWN. She has been a bi—and more—activist for more than 25 years.





# Out of Hiding

by Cait Fergus

I was driving from my favorite little coffee shop in Evanston back to school in Lake Forest when our local oldies station reminded me that it was the anniversary of John Lennon's death and that they would be playing his songs (with and without the Beatles) for the remainder of the night. This was, of course, good news to me. Who doesn't like the Beatles?

I had been anxious all week because my first semester of my senior year of college was coming to a close, and I was itching to go home and rest. Also, I had been thinking about how when I come back from break, there will be only one month until what my friends and I lovingly call the "Big Gay Conference," which is actually the Midwestern Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgendered Questioning Ally College Conference (I think I got that right), a conference I have had the privilege to attend these past three years. As one of few people who identify as bisexual in the LGBT group at my school, I am usually the one who attends bi talks and exercises in order to learn more about myself and people like me and how to approach a world that so often ignores us or does not accept us as we are.

The first song sang through the speakers in my car: "Hey! You've got to hide your love away..." The conference on my mind, I interpreted this song in a very different way than I ever had before. What if I were to sing this song, keeping all of the "she's" and "hers" in it? At present, I happen to be pining hopelessly for another woman, and this song would be perfect for me to sing at an open mic night, or perhaps while waiting with flowers in hand for her to get out of class (hmm...that might be a good idea).

Listen to this song again if you haven't heard it in a while. Think about how it applies to us and all other members of the queer community. The thing is, we've been told to "hide [our] love away" for too long. Hearing this song in a new way, I was reminded of being teased when I was only eleven years old in school because I had an obvious crush on my best friend—a girl—and losing her friendship because of it. I remembered coming out to my parents five years ago and them telling me that we could "get through it together" and not to tell my siblings or other family members. I remember them being concerned as to whether or not I had confronted a teacher, priest (I'm Catholic), or friend about it because they didn't want the news to spread. I remembered getting caught by a teacher at my all-girls high school kissing a classmate and how we were called in and reprimanded for it. I remembered the first girl I loved and how after our "first time," instead of getting to kiss her before she left, I had to promise not to tell anyone what had happened. All of these memories, all of these voices from the past telling me to hide my love came rushing at me through a very short and simple Beatles song.

How can I hide the way that I love? How can anyone? It is such a big and beautiful part of who I am, and I don't want to stifle it. This year's conference will be my last one as a student, and I am going to make the most of it. I will not be silenced. I will not be suppressed. So, "Gather round, all you clowns. Let me hear you say, 'Hey, you've got to hide your love away,'" and watch me while I don't.





# D A T E S   T O   R E M E M B E R

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## February



**Wednesday, February 6, 7-8:45 p.m.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). BliSS meets on the 1st Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations are welcome to attend. First Wednesday meetings are peer facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Third Thursday meetings are 7-8 p.m. check-ins, discussion, and announcements followed by social time at a nearby restaurant. Only want to socialize? Meet the group at or shortly after 8 p.m. in the lobby of the Boston Living Center.

**Monday, February 11, 7 p.m.** Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. If interested in attending, contact [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com). The group meets on the second Monday of each month.

**Wednesday, February 13, 7:00-9:00 p.m.** Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. All bi and bi-friendly community members welcome to attend. New board members are needed. Stop by and see first-hand what it's all about. Email Ellyn at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net) for more info. The meeting is at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

**Saturday, February 16, 11:30am.** Bi Brunch. Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) is now always the 3rd Saturday of the month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

**Thursday, February 21, 7 p.m.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See February 6th)

**Women: Is Your Partner/Boyfriend/Girlfriend Trans? 7-9 p.m.** Sponsored by Fenway's Boundless program, this is a one-time support & discussion group at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street, Boston. Join Melanie Cohn-Hopwood, LICSW for a one-time general support group for lesbian, bisexual, and straight female partners of transgender people or genderqueer folks. Topics will include self-identification, intimacy, sex, and your other concerns. Dinner provided. For info, RSVPs (appreciated but not necessary), or to be on our mailing list, contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or [jebin@fenwayhealth.org](mailto:jebin@fenwayhealth.org).

**Friday, February 22, 7:30-9 p.m.** Bi Women's Rap at the Women's Center. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Held on the 4th Friday of each month. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. For more info, contact Mischelle at [puckipucki@aol.com](mailto:puckipucki@aol.com)





# CALENDAR

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## *March*

**Wednesday, March 5, 6:30-9 p.m.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS), Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. **SPECIAL EVENT: Fighting Biphobia: What You Can Do.** Local writer and activist Robyn Ochs leads a workshop on Combating Biphobia. 6:30 p.m. Socializing and food with mad-femmepride. 7-9 p.m. Workshop. Allies and bi folks, join us as we explore the effect of biphobia in our own lives. How can we unlearn negative messages and misinformation and be proactive and fabulous rather than defensive? How can non-bi folks be allies to bisexual people? Together, we'll answer these questions, then turn our shared knowledge into tools and tactics for fighting biphobia. For info or RSVPs (appreciated but not necessary) contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or [jebin@fenwayhealth.org](mailto:jebin@fenwayhealth.org). Sponsored by Bisexual Resource Center, Fenway Community Health's Boundless & Living Well programs, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS), and Madfemmepride.

**Monday, March 10, 7 p.m.** Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See February 11th)

**Tuesday, March 11, 5:30-6:30 p.m.** Special Event: Free HIV Testing at Fenway Community Health, 7 Haviland Street in Boston. The nearest T stop is Hynes on the Green Line or via the #1 bus.

**6:30-8:30 p.m.** Adoption & Foster Care Info Event for LGBTQ Families. Harvard Graduate School of Education, Gutman Library, Appian Way, Cambridge. Have you ever considered becoming a parent or expanding your family? Have you ever considered becoming a foster or adoptive parent? Have you wanted to learn about the process and wondered if it is any different for LGBTQ individuals and couples? Learn about the process of becoming a foster or adoptive parent from professionals! Talk with LGBTQ foster and adoptive parents about their experiences! Spend time having your questions answered in face-to-face conversations. Sponsored by The Home for Little Wanderers and The Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). For questions or to RSVP, please contact Angela Times at the Home [atimes@thefhome.org](mailto:atimes@thefhome.org) or 617-469-8557.

**Wednesday, March 12, 7-9 p.m.** BRC Board Meeting. (See February 13th)

**Saturday, March 15, 11:30 a.m.** Saturday Bi Brunch. (See February 16th)

**Sunday, March 16, noon.** Boston Bisexual Women's Network Bowling Bonanza. We haven't gone out to Lanes and Games in Cambridge for quite a while, so it's time to get out and strike it up! The b-girls will meet upstairs and play ten-pin (the big balls and the big pins) for probably about two hours. Afterwards, we'll head out to a local eatery and have a late lunch together. If you are interested, email Ellyn for more details at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net).

**Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See February 6th)

**Friday, March 28, 7:30-9 p.m.** Bi Women's Rap. (See February 22nd)



# CALENDAR

## *April*

**Wednesday, April 2, 7pm.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See February 6th)

**Wednesday, April 9, 7-9 p.m.** BRC Board Meeting. (See February 13th)

**Monday, March 14, 7 p.m.** Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See February 11th)

**Thursday, April 17, 7 p.m.** Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See February 6th)

**Saturday, April 19, 11:30 a.m.** Saturday Bi Brunch. (See February 16th)

**Friday, April 25, 7:30-9 p.m.** Bi Women's Rap. (See February 22nd)

**DATES TO THINK AHEAD ABOUT:** Northampton Pride, Saturday, May 3; Boston's Youth Pride, Saturday, May 10; Dyke March, Friday, June 13; Boston Pride and BBWN's Annual Bi Pride Brunch, Saturday, June 14.



BRUNCH  
COORDINATOR WANTS  
**YOU** TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [debmo345@gmail.com](mailto:debmo345@gmail.com) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.



# THE LAST NOTE

L to R: Linda, Robyn, Maura, Lisa, Ruthie



On December 5th, MassEquality held an enormous GALA event to celebrate our June 14th victory at the State House when we defeated the constitutional amendment and protected marriage equality. During the program, the Bisexual Resource Center, Linda Blair and Robyn Ochs were thanked for their part in securing this important victory. Several BBWN gals were present at the event, including Robyn, Linda, Maura, Ruthie, Lisa, and Ellyn. We took advantage of a moment when five of us were in one place to get a group shot for *BiWomen*. We asked a woman standing nearby to take the picture for us. She agreed cheerfully, framed the shot, and then said, "OK everybody, say lesbian." We all burst out laughing. She took the first shot. We asked her to take a second. She said the same thing again, and again we burst out laughing. We don't think she had a clue why we were laughing so hard!



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# Christening

by Amanda Robinson

*\*Disclaimer. I had no idea that writing about discrimination would evoke such sarcasm.*

I recently didn't get a job because of my sexuality and it made me think about the movie the 40 year Old Virgin. Stay with me here. If you haven't seen it, the title pretty much says it all. Steve Carell plays a good natured harmless schmuck named Andy who's never done the deed. He meets a girl he likes, his friends determine it's their mission to help him seal the deal, yada yada yada, happy ending for all—no pun intended.

Back to my job. I recently interviewed for a Director position of women's softball program. The school already had an established boys Baseball division headed by a dude (hereafter referred to as the Head) who coached in the Majors and is well respected in the ball world. I have played and coached softball at an elite level and this position really intrigued me. That is until I learned that a little softball came with a whole lot of Jesus. The Head loves his baseball, and knows his stuff. Our conversations about the game, the program, the possibilities of our partnership flowed, and as far as the interview went, I hit it out of the park, I knocked the cover off it, I stole home baby (baseball analogy quota—met). But after the interview, I met his wife and kids, his staff, toured the town, shared meals, and at every turn, there was Jesus. Jesus managed to make his way into every conversation. It was remarkable.

Now before anyone gets all up in arms, let me make this clear, I have nothing against Jesus. We're cool. I'm Christian, I dig it. What I don't dig is the excessiveness. And I feel that way about anything. Ever talked to someone who'd just dropped a ton of weight? Try, just try, steering the conversation away from counting carbs and the glycemic index. It's that tone of self-righteousness and judgement that just makes me want to bolt. IMO, leave the judging up to God because he's the most qualified to do so. Can I get an Amen?

So after the interview, the Head is like, "You have great ideas; I envision turning this program over to you and you can run with it; We're getting Blackberry's, have you used one before?" After the interview and a day filled with Jesus talk, I made a decision to mention my partner at dinner. During the meal I waited for my opportunity. First came appetizers, then salad, and then the main course (which was a lovely almond crusted halibut on



The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

BiWomen is published quarterly.



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a bed on citrus infused pasta—delicious!), but no organic opportunity to out myself. I started to panic. I HAD to do it. The job itself was awesome, but there was no way I could commit without knowing if the Head would be cool with who I am. As the check came, finally, an opportunity presented itself! The Head asked, "So, would making the move out here be a problem?" I took a breath and squeaked out my answer. "No not at all. I have no reservations about moving somewhere new and my partner and I are already doing distance. She's in New York, so it's just a different flight plan." I breathed and felt my muscles relax for the first time in hours. The Head smiled and nodded. No questions, no harsh words hurtled out me, not even an acknowledgement of what I said. We moved the conversation on, rather effortlessly. The Head dropped me off at the hotel and would pick me up the following morning for breakfast before the airport.

The tone over eggs was distinctively different. He no longer referred to the girls program using "we." He didn't mention my start date and summer plans as he had the day before. He expressed concern about my experience in specific skill development areas, which was a complete turnaround from our previous conversations. The most noticeable difference was, Jesus didn't join us. Not once. Maybe he couldn't bear to make an appearance after my revelation. Or maybe he was just busy (it was a Sunday after all).

Two days later, I got an email thanking for me for my interest but I did not get the job. I know, an email! Almost as bad as when Carrie got dumped on a Post It by Burger in Sex and the City Season Four!

Back to the 40 Year Old Virgin. I am not 40, just turned 27 rather reluctantly. I have been out and proud since 15 and have led a pain-free sexual journey every since. That is until I met the Head and his silent judgement. But like Andy (Steve Carrell in the 40 YOV), I finally reached a rite of passage that every non-straight person experiences at some point or another, in some form or another. Andy was an oddball, a social misfit simply because he'd never gotten laid. All his friends had, many in their early teens, leaving Andy feel inadequate and not quite a man. When the Head passed up on me based on simply for stringing together two words (partner and she), I felt a strange sense of relief. It was my rite of passage. It was a certification of my membership in the queer community. Get a short haircut—check; go to an Indigo Girls concert—check; play softball, hockey and any other possible sport I can squeeze in—check; be discriminated against—check. The Head christened me in.

I certainly don't wish discrimination on anybody, and I'm grateful at least that I faced it at time in my life when I am secure enough to realize, it's the Head's issue, not mine. But I couldn't help but laugh when it reminded me of the 40 Year Old Virgin. Me and Andy—no longer social misfits in our respected communities. He did the deed it and the deed was done to me.



# Detroit Gathering a Good Place for Bi Bonding

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by Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Ls and the Gs and the Bs and the Ts have all dispersed now to their own separate corners of the country (and beyond), but from February 7-10 Detroit was one of the queerest cities in the Midwest when the activist community converged for NGLTF's (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) 20th annual Creating Change Conference.

As it was only my second opportunity to attend this national conference, I was excited to see if it would compare well to my first experience in Portland, Oregon in 2002. My first concern: Detroit in February? Who organized this thing? The big change was that the conference (or confabulation as they like to refer to it) was changed from November to February. Seeing that it is a gathering of activists, those activists are usually deeply into working on the November elections and were exhausted by the time they arrived at CC. Changing the pattern is a great idea for future years...but warmer climates would be nice, too.

Each day of activities included a plenary gathering where Kate Clinton held court as the emcee. In between the business of the meeting, introducing people and making announcements about conference changes, Clinton kept the crowd in stitches with her hilarious one-liners. She noted that she will be celebrating her 60th birthday this year and made a bunch of aging jokes that the elder segment of the crowd could definitely relate to. From GLBT retirement homes, ("Come over here, sweetie, and let me gum you to death.") to the reality of menopause ("Some day the Thanksgiving turkey is going to be wetter than your vagina."), she brought a levity to the proceedings. (OK, so I also ended up alone with Clinton in an elevator and got to chit-chat with her about P-town.)

On the first night of CC, Julian Bond, current Chair of the NAACP, was the featured speaker and he gave a moving speech tracing some of the civil rights connections of the black civil rights movement and the GLBT rights social justice movements. Bond noted that President Bush called himself a uniter. "It took him seven years, but boy did he ever," meaning so many people are now uniting against him and the Republican Party—finally. He also spoke of the same-sex marriage issue, making the personal connection in his own life to the 1967 Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia* that legalized interracial marriage, allowing him and his wife to marry years later. And he asked the question that GLBT people have certainly been pondering, "Why would granting a right to someone else diminish mine?...With 50 percent divorce rate I'd think we'd welcome anyone who would want to join this failing institution."

The outgoing Executive Director Matt Foreman was acknowledged for his five years leading the organization. He gave a rousing speech that was chock full of commentary on the politics of the moment and reminded the cheering crowd that there were only 347 days until we'd have a new U.S. president. He challenged us to fight for our equality at home, in our towns, cities, and states because we would



not get what we deserve from the White House. Foreman drew attention to the positive increase of protections that have been fought for and instituted in many communities and states throughout the country. He purported that 52 percent of the population is protected against discrimination due to sexual orientation, nearly 40 percent are protected on the basis of gender identity, both huge increases in the last five to ten years. Foreman gave the credit for all of the advances to those in the room and those who are one degree of separation from those in the room.

Foreman also drew attention to the recent death of a trans woman in Detroit, maintaining that these deaths continue throughout the country and are a strong argument for why we need an inclusive ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) that protects gender identity. This past fall there was a split in the GLBT community over whether to advocate for an ENDA that only protected people from sexual orientation discrimination or to also fight for the inclusion of gender identity. NGLTF and hundreds of GLBT organizations (including the Bisexual Resource Center) formed a coalition that worked on keeping an inclusive ENDA before Congress. Regardless, President Bush has said he will veto either version so now the question is should we wait until 2009 for a new (and presumably more sympathetic) administration before we gather our forces again?

Seeing that it was just after Super Tuesday's primaries, there were many discussions going on regarding the campaign. When Kate Clinton told the gathering that Gov. Mitt Romney had announced he was quitting the campaign, a huge cheer went up. Most people I spoke to were focused on the Democrats and expressed their personal struggles with making a decision between two strong candidates.

A big part of the conference for me was meeting a bunch of other bisexual activists, including many students from across the country. A bi caucus that was held one evening drew over 65 people, and all of the bi workshops were packed. One led by BRC board member Luigi Ferrer had to be changed to a much larger room to accommodate the 100+ gathering.

In most of these meetings people chose to identify in several different ways—bisexual, pansexual, queer, trans—and the issue of what to call our community popped up time and time again. I've always found bi people to be very uncomfortable with labels generally; we just hate boxes. I really appreciate that, at the same time I want to feel a sense of community through some unifying term. As someone who has identified as bi and bisexual for over 20 years it's difficult to imagine taking on a different term. Yet when I met these amazing younger activists who didn't want to use the term bi I wanted to find some way to bond with them.

One of the situations that bis often find themselves in is how to react when we are in a GLBT environment but feel either invisible or taken for granted. Yet again, the young bi activists had to face this at Creating Change and it sounded like many of them would let the organizers know that they wanted to be represented more within the greater conference itself and not just relegated to the bi caucus. It's great knowing there are so many talented young activists out there eager to work together, not only creating change but living it.





This playful collection of poems, essays and illustrations explores the delights and disappointments of everyday life. Its youthful energy may remind you of parts of yourself you had forgotten all about. Don't be alarmed if you find yourself giggling out loud!

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You can give me \$11.95 when you see me – I'll be carrying books around with me.

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Online:

Go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and type in the title (but I prefer that you order directly from me, to maximize my minimal profits!)

Buy extra copies for your friends!

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Robyn Ochs discusses the  
root causes of biphobia

Robyn Ochs gives credit to Julie Ebin for her amazing work in organizing the biphobia workshop as part of the Boundless series co-sponsored by the Fenway Community Health Center, the Bisexual Resource Center and Mad Femme Pride





# D A T E S   T O   R E M E M B E R

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## June



Wednesday, June 4, 7-8:45 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). BliSS meets on the 1st Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations are welcome to attend. First Wednesday meetings are peer facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Third Thursday meetings are 7-8 p.m. check-ins, discussion, and announcements followed by social time at a nearby restaurant. Only want to socialize? Meet the group at or shortly after 8 p.m. in the lobby of the Boston Living Center.

Thursday, June 5, 6-8 pm, The Times of Harvey Milk, Central Square Branch Library in Cambridge. In celebration of Boston's 2008 Pride Week, please join Boston Cares with a special Social Cinema screening of The Times of Harvey Milk, winner of the 1984 Academy Award for best documentary. This film is the moving and ultimately life-affirming portrait of Harvey Milk, San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor. The film follows his rise from community activist through his assassination at San Francisco's city hall. A panel discussion will directly follow the film.

Monday, June 9, 7 p.m. Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. If interested in attending, contact [kate.e.flynn@gmail.com](mailto:kate.e.flynn@gmail.com). The group meets on the second Monday of each month.

Wednesday, June 11, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. All bi and bi-friendly community members welcome to attend. Email Ellyn at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net) for more info. The meeting is at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.



# CALENDAR

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Friday, June 13, 6:00 pm, Boston's Dyke March. Gather at the Boston Common Gazebo at 6:00 for a night of frolicking and marching with the queerest women in town. Jill Soloway and Lyndell Montgomery are emceeing this year, with tunes by Zili Misik.

Saturday, June 14, 10-11:30 am, Pride Day in Boston. Start your Pride morning with a stop in at the Pre-Pride Bi Brunch! This year BBWN is teaming up with MadFemmePride to celebrate Pride morning together. Join us at Boston's First Church, 66 Marlborough Street to get psyched for the march and festival. Sliding scale of \$5-15. Do you want to volunteer at the brunch (setting up, welcoming at the door, cleaning up)? Drop Ellyn an email ([nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net)) and let her know.

BOSTON PRIDE! Kicking off from the South End on Tremont Street, the parade will wind its way down Tremont, up Beacon Street and down the other side of Beacon Hill into Government Center. There will be a bi contingent marching together, look for the BRC banner. The best thing to do is meet up at the Pre-Pride brunch and then the group will walk over to the march kick-off together. Would you like to help make signs/t-shirts and be more visible in the parade? Email Ellyn at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net) and find out how to get involved.

Thursday, June 19, 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 4th)

Saturday, June 21, 11:30am. Bi Brunch. Bi Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) is now always the 3rd Saturday of the month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

Friday, June 27, 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap at the Women's Center. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Held on the 4th Friday of each month. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. For more info, contact Mischelle at [puckipucki@aol.com](mailto:puckipucki@aol.com).





# CALENDAR

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## July

Wednesday, July 2, 6:30-9 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS), Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. (See June 4th)

Wednesday, July 9, 7-9 p.m. BRC Board Meeting. (See June 11th)

Friday, July 11, 7:30, Mouthful: An Open Mic for Open Minds, Center for New Words, 7 Temple Street, Cambridge. Mouthful meets every second Friday of the month to turn the mic over to your original writing in any genre, and munch on tasty noshes while you chat informally about writing and whatever else comes to mind. Come to read or come to listen: our goal is to build a community of writers and readers that supports women and their allies. \$5 donation requested at the door.

Saturday, July 12, 2:00 pm, BBWN Book Swap and Potluck BBQ in Brockton at Ellyn's. Yes, it's a mouthful, but from all accounts last year's swap was really worth the trip down to the lovely South Shore. We'll fire up the grill and supply all the condiments. We will have veggie burgers, some side salads, and some drinks. Just as we do at the brunches, the idea is to bring a dish and drinks to share with the group. Please bring any meat that you wish to grill, none will be supplied. Bring a few books to swap with others (not required to attend the bbq) and take home a few for your summer reading. Contact Ellyn at [nellythrustmor@comcast.net](mailto:nellythrustmor@comcast.net) for directions and to let her know you'll be attending.

Monday, July 14, 7 p.m. Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 9th)

Thursday, July 17, 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 4th)

Saturday, July 19, 11:30 a.m. Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 21st)

Friday, July 25, 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap. (See June 22nd)



# D A T E S   T O   R E M E M B E R

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## August

Wednesday, August 6, 7pm. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 4th)

Friday, August 8, 7:30, Mouthful: An Open Mic for Open Minds, Center for New Words, 7 Temple Street, Cambridge. (See July 11th.)

Monday, August 11, 7 p.m. Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 9th)

Wednesday, August 13, 7-9 p.m. BRC Board Meeting. (See June 11th)

August 17-23, Carnival Week in Provincetown. A week of festive activities including Drag Bingo, the absolutely fabulous Carnival Parade on Thursday, and much more. Bring your beads, bathing suit, and sunscreen!

Saturday, August 16, 11:30 a.m. Saturday Bi Brunch. (See June 21st)

Thursday, August 21, 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See June 4th)

Friday, August 29, 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap. (See June 27th)



BRUNCH  
COORDINATOR WANTS  
**YOU** TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [debmo345@gmail.com](mailto:debmo345@gmail.com) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.



# THE LAST NOTE



## KATE BROWN

for SECRETARY OF STATE

### Kate Brown wins Democratic primary for Oregon Secretary of State

Victory-endorsed Oregon Secretary of State candidate Kate Brown advanced to a November general election, easily winning her Democratic primary. Brown, who is currently the Democratic leader in the Oregon Senate, would become the nation's highest ranking openly bisexual elected official if she wins her November general election. She is heavily favored against her Republican opponent, who has never held elective office.

### BiWomen

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Happy 25th!

# Bi Women

A newsletter produced by the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, for women everywhere

September/October/November 2008,  
Vol. 26, No. 4

## BBWN IS 25 YEARS

It is hard to believe, but yes, BBWN is celebrating her 25th birthday. To mark the occasion Kate Keegan, Marcia Deihl and Robyn Ochs—three of BBWN's founding members—reflect on the past and present. We dedicate this issue to all of the women who have nourished and been nourished by BBWN over this past quarter century.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BBWN

by Kate Keegan

I don't remember how I learned about BBWN—an ad in *Sojourner* or *GCN* maybe... I had moved to Cambridge in December 1983 and was desperate for connection and community. I came out as a lesbian in 1976 but had the occasional affair with a man during those early years of sisterhood. In 1983 though, I fell in love with a man and moved across the country to live with him.

After being part of a vibrant and primarily separatist community in Honolulu I was suddenly on the east coast with no real dyke cred—I was living a het life, and I was terrified about the judgments of the queer community (which were harsher then). I felt like an imposter in the lesbian world so I walked over to my first BBWN meeting at New Words Bookstore feeling a mixture of relief and trepidation. In that crowded, bustling basement I found what I needed: smart, cute, political and funny women who were also looking for friendship, community, and fun. I participated in the growth and development of the group for some time, and it was a source of support and strength during my early years in Cambridge.

The concept of bisexuality seemed new, foreign, alien, inclusive, divisive, and offered opportunities for endless hours of spirited discussion. I did not question my sexuality as much as many of the other members—I knew that although I could enjoy sex with men or women, my truest feelings of attachment, affection, and political identity would always be with women. And after a few short affairs with other men and women, I have been with my beloved for 22 years. But while I was struggling with my short life as a "passing woman" I got valuable support from BBWN.

I am glad to see that BBWN still exists. I am sure it is a positive resource for those women who are looking for a place to explore their sexual identity questions. My experience with BBWN was a happy and safe one and I hope that is as true for the members now as it was way back at the beginning 25 years ago. Happy birthday, BBWN, and many happy returns.

Happy Birthday continues on page 10



## Words Matter

by Lani Ka'ahumanu

The following letter, written by Lindasusan Ulrich, went out to as many of the organizations and leadership I could get ahold of before the first big same sex marriage movement organizing meeting in San Francisco hosted by the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Equality California, and Equality For All last night July 3rd.

There was also a planned BiPOL action at the meeting: "unVEILing invisibility" that Lindasusan and her wife Emily inspired and worked on: a silent statement of about nine people [and a few children] in bridal veils, with a one page flyer [which follows] on each seat before the meeting started AND to top it off a cake, placed on the food table before people arrived, that said "Having our cake and eating it too—Bisexuals Exist."

—Lani Ka'ahumanu

## Words Still Matter: How the Marriage Equality Movement is Leaving Bisexuals Out

"Words matter." With this phrase, San Francisco Deputy City Attorney Therese Stewart summarized for the California Supreme Court why keeping same-sex couples out of marriage relegates us to second-class citizenship.

As LGBT people celebrate the Court's decision allowing same-sex couples to marry, many organizations focused on fighting Prop 8 this November—including Equality for All, NCLR, and Equality California—have decided to speak only of "gay and lesbian couples." Their rationale

Words Matter continues on page 3

Sign up  
to be on  
BBWN's  
new email  
list at  
[http://  
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yahoo.com/  
group/bi-  
womenbos-  
ton.](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bi-womenboston)



## HONOR ROLL

Carla Imperial  
Deb Morley  
Debbie Block-  
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Ellyn Ruthstrom  
Gail Zacharias  
Janie Fronek  
[REDACTED]  
Laraine  
Linda Blair  
Lisa Silveria  
Lucy  
Marie  
Maura  
Megan Jewett  
Robyn Ochs  
and  
everyone else  
who helped out  
at our pre-Pride  
brunch

And many more  
fabulous people!  
You know who  
you are!

Bi Women is published  
quarterly.

Editor: Robyn Ochs

Arts & Culture Editor:  
Lisa Silveria

Calendar Editor:  
Ellyn Ruthstrom

Sign up for our  
new email list!  
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## From your new editor

On the occasion of BBWN's 25th birthday, I am assuming the position of Editor of Bi Women. As one of the group's founders, BBWN has special meaning for me. I am both one of its mothers, and have in turn been nurtured and supported by BBWN and the women who comprise it.

I am particularly impressed by the way in which we have functioned this quarter century: we have no formal leadership, no president, no executive director. There are individuals responsible for specific tasks: managing our finances, maintaining our mailing list, editing Bi Women, organizing our monthly brunches, our special Pre-Pride Brunch, and other social events, but other than that we have somehow managed to survive all of these years as an informal collective.

Back in the winter of 2006, then editor Ellyn Ruthstrom announced that she would be unable to continue as Bi Women's editor, in order to tend to her own health and combat and recover (successfully!) from breast cancer. We searched for someone to step in as editor. After numerous requests and much silence, [REDACTED] volunteered. She had just moved to Boston from Duluth, Minnesota, and to this day we are in debt to her for stepping up to the plate. She edited Bi Women for two years, and despite the fact that she was at times working two jobs, [REDACTED] managed to get Bi Women out, issue after issue. She has stepped down to focus on other matters. [REDACTED] thank you, for your many hours of service to BBWN and Bi Women. We sincerely appreciate your efforts.

And now, with this issue, comes a new editorial team: Lisa Silveria has agreed to be our Arts & Culture Editor; Ellyn Ruthstrom will continue as Calendar Editor; and I will be Editor.

Remember: this is your newsletter. Please write in. Tell us about your life. Tell us your stories. We welcome poetry; short fiction; book, film, art and performance reviews; interviews; letters to the editor; artwork, and more. Our email address is [biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com).

Finally, if you can afford to help out, we could use your financial support. We send newsletters to community centers, youth and college groups. We give out newsletters at events. We have a policy of sending Bi Women to any woman who wants it, regardless of her ability to pay. And it costs quite a bit to do all of this. You can support bi visibility by sending us a donation, or simply by becoming a paid subscriber.

Bi for now,  
Robyn

## Next in Bi Women

The Bi Women theme for  
upcoming issues:

Dec/Jan/Feb:

### The Children in our Lives

Choosing to parent. Or choosing  
not to.. Mentoring children. Being  
mentored by them. Coming out to  
children. Children coming out to us.

Deadline: November 10, 2008

Upcoming themes will include:

Allies; The Youth Issue; Trans/Gender;  
Fantasy; Choice; Out at Work; more.

Send your suggestions for future topics to  
[biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com)

## Please Submit to Bi Women!

Send articles, calendar entries,  
letters, black-and-white art, news,  
and views to:

Bi Women

P.O. Box 301727

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

or via e-mail to  
[biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com)

If you do not want your name  
published, please tell us.

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newsletter are copyrighted by the  
authors and artists.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay and transgender people within the larger society.



## Words Matter from page 1

is that undecided moderate voters in focus groups for the "Let California Ring" education campaign found the language more acceptable than "same-sex couples." It has continued despite the fact that many bisexuals have told the organizations' leaders that they feel marginalized and attacked by the non-inclusive language.

Certainly, the stakes are enormous this November. But however these organizations explain the strategy of erasing bisexuals from this moment in LGBT history, no one asked us if we were willing to make the sacrifice.

### Why This Matters

**\* Talk of "lesbian and gay couples" completely erases bisexuals, particularly those in committed same-sex relationships.** Many bisexuals have eagerly awaited the opportunity to marry their same-sex partners.

**\* Marriage equality efforts have left bisexuals out.** None of the 30 plaintiffs in the California marriage lawsuit was an out bisexual. No bisexual organizations are part of the 55-member Equality for All coalition. And as far as we know, no bisexual leaders were contacted about this communication strategy, whether for input or simply out of respect.

**\* This exclusion is deeply painful and undermines bisexuals' ability to share in the joy of this historic victory.** At the same time, we are still asked to give time and money to secure marriage for "gay and lesbian people."

**\* It reinforces stereotypes about bisexuals, including whether we even exist.** It unravels decades of work making our community visible and educating LGT and straight people about bisexual issues and lives.

**\* The fact is that half of LGB people identify as bisexual.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the strategy of excluding bisexuals risks alienating many potential volunteers, donors, and voters.** The LGBT movement cannot afford to lose these supporters at such a critical time.

**\* The ends never justify the means.** "It's only until November" doesn't address the harm done to bisexuals' dignity and humanity in the meantime. What if the California Supreme Court had put same-sex marriages on hold until after

the November election, as requested by the backers of Prop 8? How would the LGBT community have reacted to being told, "It's only four months"?

### How We Can Move Forward—Together

**\* Use inclusive language—all the time, every time.** Develop clear and unwavering guidelines to be used in all organizational communications, whether electronic/printed materials or statements by staff and board members.

**\* Educate your staff, board, and constituencies about bi issues.** Even if your mission primarily focuses on another population, you will likely have bisexuals among the people you serve. Become a fierce bi ally.

**\* Add bisexuals to your board, committees, staff, and policy boards, including in leadership positions.** This will help ensure that the bisexual community will not be forgotten, dismissed, tokenized, or blindsided like this in the future.

**\* Review your programs and policies to see if they truly serve the needs of bisexuals.** If not, adjust or add to them as needed.

**\* Reach out to bi organizations such as the Bay Area Bisexual Network, BiNet USA, SoBOA, or Bisexual Resource Center to actively involve them in the Equality for All coalition.**

For more information about this issue, contact Lindasusan Ulrich at [bivisibility@gmail.com](mailto:bivisibility@gmail.com).

BiPOL is a bisexual feminist political action group founded in 1983  
EDUCATE ADVOCATE AGITATE

(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> According to research from the CDC, Hunter College, Witeck-Combs, and other sources



*Lindasusan and her wife, Emily*

### Brunch Coordinator Invites You to Host!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at [debmo345@comcast.net](mailto:debmo345@comcast.net) if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! And check out the calendar on pages 11-12 for activities coming up this fall. Hope you can join us.

### DO YOU KNOW WEB DESIGN?

We're looking for someone to get [biwomenboston.org](http://biwomenboston.org), our new website, up and running. If you are interested, please contact Robyn: [biwomeneditor@gmail.com](mailto:biwomeneditor@gmail.com). It's the perfect volunteer job, as you can do it from home, in your pajamas, or even in your birthday suit.

### DO YOU WANT TO KEEP IN TOUCH?

If you picked up this copy of Bi Women at an event or got it from a friend, and would like to continue to receive it, just fill out the subscription form on page 11.

## GOOD NEWS IN MASS / EN MASSE

On July 31, 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed legislation to repeal the 1913 law that barred couples from marrying in Massachusetts if their union would not be legal in their own states. This law is believed have racist roots. It was passed 95 years ago as states tried to prevent interracial marriages. Lawmakers included a provision to make the repeal effective immediately. A state study predicted that 30,000 out-of-state gay couples – most of them from New York – will marry in Massachusetts over the next three years, adding \$111 million to the state's economy and creating 330 jobs.



# Bis Around the World: The Wellington Bisexual Women's Group

by Clare Bear

The Wellington Bisexual Women's Group in Aotearoa-New Zealand recently celebrated our 20th birthday with a reunion party. Back in 1988 at least four bisexual groups mushroomed up over New Zealand, but this is the group that has "lasted the distance," thanks to its founder Caren and hundreds of women who have been part of the group since. The WBWG has provided a mixture of connections for bi and bi-friendly women, including transgender women:

- \* Social events, e.g., film nights, ten pin bowling, and gastronomic delights with pot luck dinners or samplings of the capital city's wonderful cafes;

- \* Political activism, including advocating for anti-discrimination protections, the Civil Union Bill (which passed and went into effect in 2004, and provides different-sex and same-sex couples with the same rights and obligations), and for bisexuality to be treated respectfully by the gay and lesbian communities (mixed success on that last one!);

- \* Education, with pamphlets, stalls at the Gay/Lesbian Fair, and for many years, a four-week closed "forum" for maybe-bi's to share and learn together about Sexual Orientations 101;

- \* Support, affirmations and hugs for a range of life events, such as marriages or commitment ceremonies, births/deaths, personal tragedies, and opening art/film exhibitions.

Wellington hosted two of New Zealand's three national bisexual conferences in the early 1990s, and it was fabulous to share birthday cake and gossip with women from as far away as Coromandel and Northland (500-1000 km north) – and even two members back from the USA. There were so many exciting life stories to catch up on.

We enjoyed a re-screening of a film about a local bisexual singer-celebrity, Hinemoana Baker. The film, by our very own Angela Boyd, headlined last year's Queer Film Festival. And we're due to screen in another bi outing on Maori TV's "Takataapui" program soon – takataapui being a Maori word for "queer" – which embraces the concept of intimate same-sex relationships, whether physically sexual or not.

Finally, many close friendships have formed over the years, and there were plenty of exclamations and giggles at the reunion slide show of 20 years' of memories and photos – including tragic hair styles, bold party dress-ups and slimmer waistlines. It was a fabulous evening, and now we're looking forward to our 30th anniversary, and what we might look back on then.



Photo: from 2002 dress up ball. Clare is the 5<sup>th</sup> from left.

## Naturally Bi



*Scientific American* (July 2008) has an article by Emily Driscoll entitled: "Bisexual Species: Unorthodox Sex in the Animal Kingdom," that reviews various cross-species studies on sexual behaviors of animals both in the wild and in captivity. The article clearly delineates patterns of sexuality more suggestive of bisexual rather than same-sex orientation among all these species. Here are two quotes from the article:

"Researchers are now revealing, for example, that animals may engage in same-sex couplings to diffuse social tensions, to better protect their young or to maintain fecundity when opposite-sex partners are unavailable—or simply because it is fun. These observations suggest to some that bisexuality is a natural state among animals, perhaps *Homo sapiens* included, despite the sexual-orientation boundaries most people take for granted. "[In humans] the categories of gay and straight are socially constructed," Anderson says.

"We should be calling humans bisexual because this idea of exclusive homosexuality is not accurate of people," Roughgarden says. "Homosexuality is mixed in with heterosexuality across cultures and history."

You can find the entire article online at: [www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=bisexual-species](http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=bisexual-species).

## Connecticut Pride (re)includes "Bisexual"

The CT Pride Committee voted to reverse its position regarding use of the word "bisexual" which had been excluded from official publicity for Pride celebrations. Although the decision was not unanimous, the committee decided to add the word to all official literature and advertising for Pride. [[from Metroline (April 2008) [www.metroline-online.com](http://www.metroline-online.com)]



## YOU TOO CAN CREATE CHANGE IN DENVER

The 21st National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change will be held in Denver, Colorado, Jan. 28–Feb. 1, 2009. Each year the conference is held in a different region of the United States and attracts 2,500+ participants from within and outside of the LGBT community. It's well known for providing a unique environment where activists and leaders come together from diverse places and backgrounds to create a community that is both strengthening and inspiring to the participants. Creating Change is for you if you are: an activist and organizer in your community, campus or workplace; a board member, staff member or leader in a LGBT organization, community center or foundation; an elected or appointed official; a change agent for justice, freedom & equality for all. In other words, Creating Change has something for everyone! Conference session proposals are due on September 30, 2008. Online proposal submission and complete information can be found at [www.creatingchange.org](http://www.creatingchange.org). Come be part of the Bi Caucus!



Ellyn Ruthstrom at Creating Change 2008

## Skim

By Mariko and Jillian Tamaki

Reviewed by Sarah E. Rowley

Kimberly Keiko Cameron, aka Skim, is a chunky goth Wiccan at an all-female Canadian private school in 1993. She spends her time practicing spells with her equally unpopular best friend, Lisa, and navigating the tricky terrain of her separated and feuding parents.

When one of her classmates is dumped by her boyfriend, who then commits suicide, the entire school gets caught up in mourning and facile exercises to improve the students' mental health. No one seems to notice that Skim has fallen in love with Ms. Archer, her English teacher, and that her deepening depression has everything to do with how alone she is with her feelings.

Told in the form of Skim's diary, this graphic novel from cousins Mariko and Jillian Tamaki is an absorbing story you can read in one sitting. Skim is easy to identify with and root for, and a far cry from the stereotypes that usually surround women of Asian descent on the rare occasions that they are represented at all. (The great exception being Nina Revoyr, whose novels *The Necessary Hunger* and *Southland* feature Asian-American lesbians protagonists in far-from-stereotypical roles.)

In recent years graphic novels have gathered more mainstream respect and become particularly important as venues for the stories of people marginalized by race or sexuality. Skim joins Marjane Satrapi's *Perspolis*, Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, and Adrian Tomine's *Shortcomings*, and Charles Burns's *Black Hole* in using both words and pictures to tell a story of outsider angst.

Author Jillian Tamaki perfectly captures the flavor of teen-speak in both the dialogue and Skim's narration, while her cousin Mariko's artwork, which often plays tricks with perspective, communicates what Skim can't say.

I particularly liked the novel's emphasis on female friendship as a force for both good and evil, and the story's resolution, which treads a fine line between showing improvement while leaving many of Skim's conflicts realistically unsolved. It's a promising debut from two talented young women, and will reward those who seek it out.

*Sarah is co-editor of Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*



## Revelation

You wore a micro mini skirt the day  
I asked you to cut back the calla lilies.  
A chubby nine-year-old girl  
biked up and down the sidewalk,  
up and down, up and down.  
You bent over to clip a flower.  
The bike stopped short,  
and in that glimpse of heaven  
a baby dyke was born.

*Jan Steckel is a writer, a former pediatrician, and a bisexual activist and the author of a poetry chapbook *The Underwater Hospital* (Zeitgeist Press). Her writing has won numerous awards and has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize.*



## MadFemmePride

MadFemmePride is a grassroots, member-driven social group that seeks to make Boston a friendlier and safer place for femininity, femmes, feminism, and queerness in every form. With almost 2200 members in the Boston area, MadFemmePride has spawned events including the first Boston-area femme-femme speed-dating event; rollerskating; discussions about safer sex, partner abuse, fighting biphobia, and butch-femme community; dog-walking play dates; tea parties; basketball games and gatherings to watch or play just about any sport you can think of; house parties; sushi-making parties; BBQs; and camping trips. MadFemmePride loves to collaborate and has teamed up with the Boston Bisexual Women's Network on a club night and this year's Pre-Pride Brunch. Look forward to more!

MadFemmePride is committed to encouraging diversity and acceptance in the queer community. Femmes come in all sexes, genders, styles, and sizes. MFP says "You can't always spot us by our lipstick, our clothes, or who we sleep with. We're an integral part of the LGBTQ community and we're committed to making Boston's community more inclusive, more accepting, and more welcoming for newcomers and life-long members of all genders and styles." Check out [www.madfemmepride.org](http://www.madfemmepride.org) or email [madfemmepride@yahoo.com](mailto:madfemmepride@yahoo.com) for more info.

## Split Screen wins Bisexual Lammy

The 2008 winner of the Bisexual category of the Lambda Literary Awards (Lammys) is *Split Screen*, by Brett Hartinger (HarperCollins Children's Books). Bi activist, entertainment writer and critic Other finalists for this category were *Look Both Ways*, Jennifer Baumgardner (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux); *Becoming Visible*, Beth Firestein, Ed., (Columbia University Press); *The Tourists*, Jeff Hobbs (Simon & Schuster); and *Stray*, Sheri Joseph (MacAdam/Cage).

### A funny thing happened on the way to the bi category...

by Mike Szymanski, co-author *Bisexual's Guide to the Universe*

The Lambda Literary Awards were once again wonderful, especially with the second year that the new Bisexual category was included.

I wore my big "BI" t-shirt and Nicole [co-author of *Bisexual's Guide to the Universe*] sat with me, and activists such as Tim Miller, Terry DeCrescenzo, Karen Ocamb, Mark Thompson, Kelly Forrest and Torie Osborn not only came up to us to tell us they know about the book, but to congratulate us for the new category! Then, to top it off, new Lambda Board president Chris Rice (Anne's son) told us that now that we're on the West Coast, he expects us (Denise Penn [Editor of *Bi Magazine*], Nicole and I) to be more involved (as Wendy [Curry] and Sheela [Lambert] back east had to set this all up!)

The best moment, though, was when things were a bit mixed up in the first few categories and the wrong trophies were handed out to the wrong people, and Denise Penn came up and started off with, "And they say I'M CONFUSED!" It got a huge roar of applause and laughter, and then, by accident, Denise dropped the award she was carrying. No, it didn't crack, but it brought down the house.

Denise swears it was all ad-libbed, and it only adds to her spontaneous brilliance!

I'm glad she presented the award, and how unique that the new addition to this category is a very sweet teen lit book (*SPLIT SCREEN* by Brent Hartinger) which shows the very unique range of bi writing we have in our community.



## Bi the Way: On the Road to Bi Visibility

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

It seems to be the dilemma of bisexuality in the media. We are continually being invented, discovered, uncovered, and examined by people who aren't really sure who we are or whether we exist. Every couple of years there's a surge of interest in unveiling the truth about bisexuals, and then it dies down until the same storylines bubble up a few years later.

Even after groundbreaking work like Lani Ka'ahumanu and Loraine Hutchins's *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out* in 1994 and Marge Garber's academic *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* in 2000, we still have to deal with renewed disbelief and genuine surprise when "evidence" of bisexuality peaks out in the culture. In 2005, Robyn Ochs and Sarah Rowley's *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* shared the stories of bi-identified people from almost all corners of the world: are we real yet?

The new documentary *Bi the Way*, released this year and premiering at film festivals around the country, again takes on the task of proving that bisexuals exist. The two directors, Brittany Blockman and Josephine Decker, decided to crisscross the U.S. to find out if bisexuality was a fad or whether

a new sexual revolution was taking place in teens/twenties that would break open a greater cultural understanding of sexuality.

The documentary is light and enjoyable. Good music, interesting people highlighted, high production quality. How critical can I be about a 90-minute film that actually acknowledges that I exist and that I have a tribe and culture? I tip my hat to the directors and producer who made sure this film got made. Keep showing it as often as you can! We are too often made second-class LGBT citizens or fetishized in the straight community, so it is refreshing to see our sexuality discussed with respect and good humor.

However, seeing *Bi the Way* made me long for the future documentary that will not have to spend time establishing the validity of bisexuality and will show that there really is a bisexual community. I know there are better ways than rolling up to a drive-through window in a town (a technique used in the film) to find out if there are bisexual people around. I've spent twenty years enjoying a vibrant bi community, and I know others who have spent more time than that. We really are a hard-working and politicized part of the queer community and that's the film I'd like to see.



## poems and musings

by Lindsay Pratt

### Summer Jobs and Schoolgirl Crushes

The first girl I fell for had the name of an expensive hotel; it connoted wealth and a land that I could never enter. I was sweetly young then, and while the paint dried on the scenery of the sets that I diligently painted according to specs, I would climb up the catwalk watching her set lights, humming Joni Mitchell tunes because I didn't have the self-awareness to speak words of wanting. Her hands, callused from her work, would hang the metal and glass, giving light to the action below. And occasionally she would smile at me, letting me know that my company was welcome.

Early in the summer I somehow made myself her gopher so as to have an excuse to be near. Between layers or when the sun began to bake the stage, bubbling the latex paint like active lava, I would run for electric tape, water, messages, anything that gave a purpose to my clinging to her side--a purpose other than my naïve flirtation that I did not understand. She after all, was falling in love with an acrobat at the same time that I was falling for her. And while I was old enough to want, I was too young to be wanted. Every summer after that at openings of plays, I would look for

her name in the back of the program, the names no one ever reads unless out of professional curiosity. My heart would begin to race if her name appeared, and all sense of the play would be lost on me as I stole glances at the lighting booth. And though I grew older, when I would meet her after the show I would become awkward again, sixteen and unknowing despite the passing years. The fact that I was once just that--a foolish teenage girl--caused me to regress in my embarrassment, so I could never be anything more in her eyes. And the fantasy that I built around her in those lazy summer daydreams, was never tested by reality, and so remained intact.

Over the years I have developed many a schoolgirl crush. Doting on the person as if they are only their positive attributes. Even their shadows glow in the light of the dream of them. The more secrets learned the more the truth is distorted. Anger problems become: "an intense side due to being artistically misunderstood," and ethical discrepancies become: "an inability to live by others' conventions due to a wild streak." All is romanticized. All is fantasy and insubstantial. And must not be played out, for the moment it begins

to solidify in flesh and blood is the moment it is most threatened--reality hasn't a chance against invention.

I misunderstood this for years. Longing for the unattainable, I would sulk because I could not have this person that I had decided was everything to me. I would write poetry and create pieces of art, write songs that if they heard would melt their hearts or, at least, make them notice me. This pitiful desire is after all a catalyst for creative energy, as long as you steer clear of the overused word "love". I reveled in the ache of it.

It was not until reality became more astounding than any fantasy my imagination could create, that the truth of my adolescent crushes came to light. The "if only's" became ridiculous because if she or he had my heart would have been broken more than by love unrequited. The dream gave hope of someday finding someone who returned my love, someday finding that dream incarnate. The years that I criticized myself for being foolish and young have ended with this new understanding. That foolishness was less witless than I knew for youth serves age. So when next I see that girl that I pined for, I will not blush, but give thanks for the lesson that let me find a love worth more than any dream.

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#### Echo and Narcissus

Did I say goodbye?  
or did I walk down the street  
back turned--  
a simple action  
that has been made hereditary?  
like brown eyes that sometimes  
look green;  
I am not that cunning.

I could say goodbye  
like Echo,  
cursed into repetition  
of your last word,  
and you would drown  
in your own reflection  
because it would be more intriguing  
than my endless farewells  
that mean something else.

Is this how I will be damned?

With no words of my own  
would my thoughts soon abandon me,  
having so weak an owner?

And if you did say

"I love you"  
that night,  
all I could have answered  
would have been  
"you."

---

#### Loneliness on sea-scaped nights

Loneliness on sea-scaped nights  
with edgeless fogged emotion  
not held by string.  
I was enough  
in darkness  
when all you did was feel;  
searchlight on,  
to the low bellowed horns,  
and my skin shrinks

back to the confines of my body,  
taut,  
and too easily encompassed.  
But push me off this shore,  
let the ocean fill my blood,  
and I'll have no end  
with each melting into the next;  
gulls landing on skin  
and the fish through my veins,  
I'll swallow more than night  
as I become more  
than what is enough for you,  
and being so filled  
I'll see through waterlogged eyes  
that you are not.

*Lindsay, 24, lives in San Francisco. She studies psychology and Queer Studies at City College of San Francisco, and works with the Gender Diversity Project, an organization focused on transgender activism within education. In addition Lindsay is an actor, artist and singer. She recently appeared in a production of Romeo and Juliet in the role of Benvolio, and her band, Waterproof Souls, has made a demo and will begin performing around the SF bay area soon.*



## THE OP-ED PROJECT

is an initiative to target and train women experts across the nation to project their voices on the op-ed pages of major newspapers and other key forums of public discourse, which are currently overwhelmingly dominated by male voices. This is a media democracy project, designed to promote diversity on the op-ed pages and beyond. The premise of this project is not "women's affirmative action" - in fact, it is not a "women" project at all: It's an everyone project. The lack of diversity on the op-ed pages deprives the public of robust, democratic debate, especially important in this space, which is intended to showcase divergent opinions. See more information and testimonials, sign up for upcoming Op-Ed classes through the Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership, or contact Catherine Orenstein to schedule a seminar for your organization. [www.op-ed-project.org](http://www.op-ed-project.org).

## The Privilege of the Sword

By Ellen Kushner

Reviewed by Deborah Block-Schwenk

Katherine is a well-bred fifteen year old whose family teeters on the verge of poverty due to a lawsuit initiated by her uncle. Then the news comes that her uncle, the Duke of Tremontaine, will drop the lawsuit and compensate the family for their legal entanglements on one condition: Katherine must go to stay with him in the city for six months, wear what he chooses for her, and learn the sword.

So begins *The Privilege of the Sword*, the third of Ellen Kushner's "Riverside" novels set in and around a colorful neighborhood in an unnamed city. 1987's *Swordpoint* introduced us to this land, with its decadent nobles, valorous swordsmen and ubiquitous bisexuality. The sequel, *The Fall of the Kings* (written with Kushner's real life wife Delia Sherman in 2002) was set 40 years later and filled in the background mythology of the land with a tale of male homoeroticism and erotically tinged magic. While strong women characters are present in both books, they are operating within a patriarchal domain that neither novel critiques. The newest book, set chronologically between the others, gives us a female protagonist who is thrust into a clash of gender roles and expectations.

Although the three Riverside novels can all be read as stand-alone stories, *The Privilege of the Sword* is closely tied in with *Swordpoint* and works better as a sequel to that book. Katherine's story is new to Privilege, but many of the other characters are continuing a story arc that began in *Swordpoint*. Privilege also sets up the situations of several of the supporting characters in *Fall of the Kings*. With *The Privilege of the Sword*, Ellen Kushner has not only filled in many gaps in the story line but has given us an enjoyable and powerful novel about women, how their potential is too often limited, and what they can accomplish when given the ability to act.

## Torchwood Season 2

(BBC America, DVD out September 16, also available on iTunes).

Reviewed by Deborah Block-Schwenk

Season 1 of the BBC sci-fi show was advertised with the gimmick that all of the characters would have at least one bisexual moment (see my review in Bi Women Vol. 25, No. 2, April/May/June 2007). Thankfully, the second season has abandoned such gimmicks in favor of more deeply, although subtly, developing the romantic relationship between two of the men on the team, both bisexual. Sadly, computer expert Toshiko doesn't get a chance to further explore her same sex attractions this season. Instead she connects with men, including in the episode "To the Last Man," a lovely meditation on destiny and duty.

Overall, the show and the characters matured a great deal compared to the first season, adding humor and more genuine emotion to the mix. Fans of Buffy the Vampire Slayer won't want to miss guest star James Marsters' role as Captain John Hart, an ex-partner (in all meanings of the term) of Torchwood's leader Captain Jack Harkness. BBC budget cuts are leading to a shortened season 3 (expected to air on BBC America in 2009 shortly after the UK airs it), but I hope the show continues to mature and to showcase its bisexual characters as complex human beings.



## Anything Goes: The Autobiography.

John Barrowman with Carole E. Barrowman



Reviewed by Deborah Block-Schwenk

Openly gay John Barrowman plays openly bisexual Captain Jack Harkness on TV shows Torchwood and Doctor Who, a role that's catapulted him into major stardom in the UK and cult status in the US. Before joining the science fiction shows, Barrowman was a musical theater star in London's West End as the male lead in shows such as Anything Goes and Miss Saigon.

In this chatty, upbeat memoir, Barrowman shares anecdotes of this childhood, his theater career, his sci fi stardom, and his life with long-term partner Scott Gill. The book is a paean to family (exemplified by the fact that Barrowman's sister Carole served as the book's shaper and supporting author). It provides a model of a close-knit, loving and unconditionally accepting family who have always nurtured Barrowman's talents. Theater fans will enjoy the stories of behind the scene pranks and problems; fans of Barrowman himself will especially enjoy the many photos and learning more about this talented man's life and career.



## Amazing Bisexuals: Focus on Lisa Silveria

*In each issue of Bi Women, we plan to profile a woman who is involved in BBWN. The woman profiled in one issue will get to choose who will be featured in the next issue, and to interview her. In this issue, Robyn Ochs interviews Lisa Silveria, Bi Women's new Arts & Culture editor.*

RO: Lisa, about a year ago, you showed up at a BBWN event and I must say that you were a breath of fresh air! From the moment you appeared, you became an enthusiastic and engaged volunteer. You've been organizing the newsletter mailings, you've hosted one brunch and are about to host another on November 16th! You and your sweetie brought me dinner when I had surgery. I know that doesn't count as BBWN volunteer work, but it sure meant a lot to me! And of course, you've attended several brunches, and accepted the position of Arts & Culture editor for Bi Women. We all have our various reasons for getting involved in organizations (or for not getting involved). Can you tell us a bit about what made you decide to show up the first time, and what made you come back?

LS: Sure! I had recently moved to Boston from San Francisco and was looking for community and new friends in the area. Ideally, I was hoping to make friendships with queer and bi-identified women. When I'm dating a man (as I am currently), the outside world and even many of our friends see me as a

straight woman. After a while, it can start to feel as if I'm losing part of myself, so it's very important for me to stay connected with the queer community and to continue to make friendships with women who can identify with my situation.

I've met so many wonderful and welcoming women in the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Communities like this exist because of the participation of their members, so it's important for me to contribute when I find a community that I connect with.

RO: What brought you from San Francisco to Boston?

LS: A couple of things, actually. Art is a passion of mine and for years I dreamt of going back to art school and being able to dedicate concentrated time to exploring and creating art. My partner is finishing up his PhD at Northeastern, so this seemed like the perfect opportunity to break the long-distance barrier and fulfill a dream at the same time. So I did. I quit my job, packed up the cats, moved to Boston, and started art school.

RO: Can you tell us a bit of your coming out story?

LS: Well I can remember having feelings of attraction to women (or girls at the time) before I was ever attracted to men. I struggled with those feelings personally all through my childhood and teenage years. I don't think I fully and consciously came out to myself until after I graduated from high school. At around 19 or 20 I started talking to a couple of my closest friends about these feelings, and at 25 I had my first date with a woman. I'm 33 now and since then I've had relationships with women and men, but I think I'll probably never stop coming out. Being in a committed relationship with a man essentially allows the world to see me as a straight woman. I will never be able to change the way most people see me, but coming out will continue to be a constant and important process for the rest of

my life.

RO: Did you attend any bi events in the San Francisco Bay Area?

LS: Not really. I have several queer friends in San Francisco, but it wasn't a priority for me at the time to specifically find Bi events. Now that my relationship with my partner is becoming more serious, I find it's becoming more important for me to connect with people who more closely identify with my situation.

RO: What advice would you give to women reading this who are thinking about getting involved in this organization?

LS: I suppose I would say, stop hesitating and just show up. I always feel a little nervous when I show up to an event where I don't know anyone. But with this group, there's really no reason to be nervous. I've never felt judged. I've only felt welcomed. Groups like this evolve over the years as new members join. We all benefit from every fresh new face.



*Refuge, 2007 (oil on canvas 60x48)*

## JUSTICE AT JUSTICE (for a change)

A recent Justice Department ruling released in June determines that children of same-sex couples can receive their Social Security benefits from their non-biological parent. Steven A. Engel of the Office of Legal Council wrote in the opinion that the Defense of Marriage Act does not apply to Social Security benefits for children. "Although DOMA limits the definition of 'marriage' and 'spouse' for purposes of federal law, the Social Security Act does not condition eligibility for [child insurance benefits] on the existence of a marriage or on the federal rights of a spouse in the circumstances of this case."

## GOODBYE, DEL MARTIN, AND THANK YOU

Lesbian rights pioneer Del Martin died on August 27th, at 87. She and Phyllis Lyon, her partner of 55 years, were the first to be legally married in California on June 16. Del and Phyllis were founders of Daughters of Bilitis – the first lesbian rights group – in 1955 and spent their entire adult lives working for equality.



*Del Martin marrying Phyllis Lyon.*



Birthday, from page 1

## For BBWN, on her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

by Marcia Deihl

1. I miss Joanna Lancaster of the Bivocals [and one of the founders of BBWN, who passed away in the 1990s – ed.]. She was such a dear, odd spirit and I think of her often. I miss everyone else, but I hope they send something in so I can catch up with them.

2. I'm still bi, "truth in advertising" to people I know (I don't always bring it up, but in context, I never hide it), to potential dates (males in my case), and I feel more and more as I age that my first triad crush was sort of the spirit nudge inside that made me click with bisexuality. In junior high, a girl pal and I had crushes on a couple, and in high school, I was crushed out on my friend, her boyfriend, and her brother. It was all a mush of crush.

3. Crushes are not for grownups, I mean, as the only relationship activity, and again, over time I am open to many more types of men (and or former men). I've been single more time than coupled, which I'm not wild about, but it is what it is. My favorite former love was a trannie (and I use that term with all the love that GLBT family means, not as a put down), which, of course, combined roles and genders in some ways. I feel very connected to trans liberation movements and hope to become more active if I ever retire (soon!).

4. The most interesting thing I've learned after 25 years, besides how powerful hormones are (it's not all "nurture," as I used to think as a feminist), is the idea that you have to have slept with someone recently to sort of update your bi identity. Norm Davis, a bi friend I met in 1983 (I think) at a conference told me that one of his (heterosexual) women friends told him, "Norm, cut the crap, you're gay, not bi. How long since you've slept with a woman?" Norm, knowing the answer would be twenty or thirty years, said, "Well, how long since YOU'VE slept with a man?" Answer probably about the same. If hetero people don't have to screw someone to keep current, neither do we. Which is why, even though I am much more attracted to men, and I like the plumbing, so to speak, and I haven't slept with a woman in almost 30 years, I feel totally (like totally!) bisexual inside.

5. When I was recently interviewed about being bi in "the straight" world and "the gay world," I didn't really relate to the terms. I'm bi in a GLBT book club, I'm me at work (only one other out queer coworker in 25 people), my church (Old Cambridge Baptist Church) is about half and half, and I really don't feel like there are two worlds. But I happen to live in Cambridge and be 59 years old and have set up my life to support me, so I guess it's not surprising. When I was 20, I was mass of vagueness and insecurity and fear. So there are some compensations for getting older. Quite a few, actually.

Bless the bisexuals,  
Love,  
Marcia D.  
Cambridge, MA



Kate, Charnan, Robyn and Sylvia at Boston Pride, early 1980s



BBWN at Boston Pride, early 1990s



BBWN women, on the day Annie Goglia came back to visit, 2008. Take special notice of our youngest and newest member, Kai.

## So much, for so long. Thank you, BBWN

by Robyn Ochs

In September of 1982, I had been out to myself for six years, and had only recently come out to a few friends and begun dating women. I had just moved to Somerville, MA and was taking a break from painting my new apartment when I saw an announcement in *Sojourner: The Women's Forum* for an event hosted by the Women's Center in Cambridge. The Women's Rap hosted weekly discussions and, much to my delight, the topic of the week was "Bisexuality," and it was scheduled for that very night! I stripped off my paint-covered clothes, threw my body into the shower, and drove over to the meet-

ing. Honestly – though perhaps not logically—prior to that meeting I felt I was one of at most a dozen bisexual women in the entire world. Well, when I arrived at the Women's Center I found about 20 women, 19 of whom identified as bi. Well, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. My primary memory of that night was of looking around the circle of women and feeling so .... well, not alone! I grinned so much that night that my cheeks were sore! Out of this meeting came the BiVocals, a support group of eight women, who conceived of and birthed BBWN one year later.

Twenty-five years have passed. I'm still (VERY) involved in BBWN, and as strongly bisexually identified as ever. Looking back, I realize that BBWN has been the source of many of my closest friends over the years. I don't believe that bisexual women are *per se* any better or worse than any other women. But I do believe that women who have the courage to publicly identify as bisexual, who resist powerful social pressures to accommodate the binary system, who choose to be active and involved... these women are special. Thank you BBWN for bringing so many wonderful women into my life.

—Robyn Ochs,  
Jamaica Plain, MA





July 2008 Bi Book Swap at Ellyn's

## CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

October 31 ♦ Fri. 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap. (See Sept. 26th)

## November

November 4 ♦ Tu. Get out and VOTE!

November 5 ♦ Wed. 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See Sept. 3rd)

November 14 ♦ Fri. 7:30, Mouthful: An Open Mic for Open Minds, Center for New Words, 7 Temple St., Cambridge. (See Sept. 12th)

November 10 ♦ Mon. 7 p.m. Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See Sept 8th)

November 12 ♦ Wed. 7-9 p.m. BRC Board Meeting. (See Sept 10th)

November 15 ♦ Sat. 11:30 a.m. Saturday Bi Brunch. (See Sept 20th)

November 16 ♦ Sun. noon. BBWN Potluck brunch at Lisa's in Jamaica Plain. Please bring a potluck dish or drinks to share. You can contact Lisa at [lisa.silveria@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.silveria@gmail.com) or 415-806-1257 for directions, and to let her know you are coming. BBWN brunches are a great opportunity to meet and socialize with bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

November 20 ♦ Th. 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See Sept. 3rd)

November 28 ♦ Fri. 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap. (See Sept. 26th)

*Biversity Boston ([biversity.org](http://biversity.org)) is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.*

## Secrets So Deep by KG MacGregor

Reviewed by Lara Zielinsky

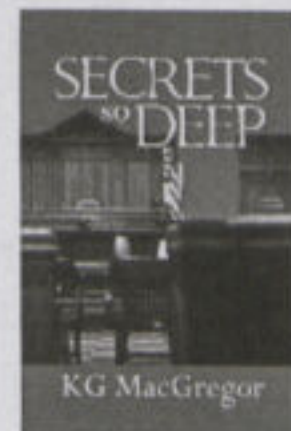
Glynn Wright is a Republican congresswoman from Indiana with a few secrets. She cemented her position as a moderate by marrying again following her first husband's death. When her son Sebby attempts suicide, Glynn will stop at nothing to provide him with every chance to get well, even if it means that her secrets must come out.

Through counseling, Sebby's psyche reveals a tragedy: Sebby may have witnessed his father's murder.

Glynn is determined to save her family and find the root of Sebby's uncovered memory regardless of political repercussions. Is it a faulty memory, a planted suggestion, or is the truth hidden from Glynn in her subconscious? The public demands to know if she really loved her husband, or if she was unfaithful to him and even murdered him. Through this discovery, Glynn finds a friend in Dr. Charlotte Blue (the ER psychiatrist who first evaluated Sebby).

Countering the popular portrayals of bisexuality as psychotics or sexually promiscuous, Glynn Wright is so "normal" that there is no doubt that she is a loving widow and mother. Her bisexuality was not a secret from her deceased, beloved husband or from her teen son who is accepting of his mother's private life.

KG MacGregor deftly shows the conflicts bisexual women face not only in the straight community but also with lesbians: Glynn's only girlfriend since her husband's death was troubled by Glynn's bisexuality. The public sees Glynn as a lesbian, though she is clearly a bisexual woman who had a deep relationship with her husband followed by an equally deep relationship with a woman. *Secrets So Deep* is a well-written story from a popular lesbian romance author, and a welcome portrayal of a bisexual woman.



## Bi Women wants you!!!



### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

for Bi Women

(sliding scale)

\_\_\_ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

\_\_\_ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

\_\_\_ \$30-\$99 Supporter

\_\_\_ \$100 on up Goddess

\_\_\_ Renewal

\_\_\_ New Subscriber

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

BBWN, P.O. BOX 301727, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



## The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

### Ongoing Events

#### Last Fridays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

#### 2nd Mondays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

#### 1st Wednesdays, 3rd Thursdays:

BLISS: Bisexual Support & Social Group, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

#### 2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

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# CALENDAR

## September

September 10 ♦ Wed. 7-9 p.m. Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. All bi and bi-friendly community members welcome to attend. Email Ellyn at nellythrustmor@comcast.net for more info. At the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. near Back Bay station on the Orange Line.

September 12 ♦ Fri. 7:30, Mouthful: An Open Mic for Open Minds, Center for New Words, 7 Temple St., Cambridge. Mouthful meets every second Friday of the month to turn the mic over to your original writing in any genre, and munch on tasty noshes while you chat informally about writing and whatever else comes to mind. Come to read or come to listen: the goal is to build a community of writers and readers that supports women and their allies. \$5 donation requested at the door.

September 17 ♦ Wed. Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD) goes to the movies. The Bisexual Resource Center is teaming up with Cinemental for a bi-focused night of short films, including Bi Camp produced by our very own Wayne Bryant! Come out to the Brattle Theatre to celebrate bisexual celluloid and support the local bi community. Films start at 9:30. For more details closer to the date, visit [www.biresource.net](http://www.biresource.net).

September 18 ♦ Th. 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See Sept. 3rd)

September 20 ♦ Sat. 11:30am. Biversity Brunch (a mixed gender bi group) is now always the 3rd Saturday of the month at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Sq. in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

September 20 ♦ Sat. Out in the Park is the annual GLBT visibility day at Six Flags New England in Agawam, Massachusetts. Visit [outinthepark.com](http://outinthepark.com) for more info.

September 20-21 ♦ Sat./Sun. SpeakOut Speaker Training. Have you ever wanted to help raise awareness about GLBT lives in the community by speaking about your own life? SpeakOut is the oldest GLBT speakers' bureau in the country and they are holding their renowned two-day training at their offices at 31 Heath St., Jamaica Plain, MA. \$75 registration before September 12, \$35 for

low-income and students. Call 617-238-2408 or visit [www.speakoutboston.org](http://www.speakoutboston.org) to find out more details.

September 26 ♦ Fri. 7:30-9 p.m. Bi Women's Rap at the Women's Center. A discussion group for bisexual, bi-friendly, and questioning women. Held on the 4th Friday of each month. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807. For more info, contact Mischelle at [puckipucki@aol.com](mailto:puckipucki@aol.com).

## October

October 1 ♦ Wed. 6:30-9 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS), Bisexual Resource Center, 29 Stanhope Street, Boston. (See September 3rd)

October 8 ♦ Wed. 7-9 p.m. BRC Board Meeting. (See Sept. 10th)

October 10 ♦ Fri. 7:30, Mouthful: An Open Mic for Open Minds, Center for New Words, 7 Temple Street, Cambridge. (See Sept. 12th)

October 10-19 ♦ Provincetown Women's Week. Travel down to the tip of Cape Cod for autumn fun with hundreds of queer women. Entertainment, golf, dancing, and much more. Visit [www.womeninnkeepers.com](http://www.womeninnkeepers.com) for more details.

October 11 ♦ Sat. National Coming Out Day. Many campuses and organizations sponsor events on this day to spread awareness about GLBT lives. Check to see if there is something going on in your area—and come out!

October 19 ♦ Sun. BBWN Potluck Brunch, 11 a.m. at Megan and Carla's in Jamaica Plain. Please bring a potluck dish or drinks to share. Email Carla at [carlaimperial@yahoo.com](mailto:carlaimperial@yahoo.com) or call 617-522-8819 for directions and to let them know you are coming. BBWN brunches are a great opportunity to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the Boston area.

October 13 ♦ Mon. 7 p.m. Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See Sept. 8th)

October 16 ♦ Th. 7 p.m. Bisexual Social and Support Group (BliSS). (See Sept. 3rd)

October 18 ♦ Sat. 11:30 a.m. Saturday Bi Brunch. (See Sept. 20th)

**CALENDAR** continues on page 11